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THE COMMANDMENTS OF JESUS

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THE COMMANDMENTS OF JESUS

BY

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AUTHOR OF

"THE TEACHING OF JESUS" &c.

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PREFACE

In making the study of the *Teaching*, which was published three years ago, I became aware that the *commandments* of Jesus, as a rule of life, and as the principle of Ethics, required a separate and more careful treatment. Thus the present book grew out of the other, as Eve was produced from a rib of Adam. And yet, once produced, this book stands on its own footing, and is related to the other as Eve to Adam. That is to say, it is a complement; but it is a necessary complement.

For these three years I have been constantly revolving these precepts of the Lord which refer to and direct our conduct on earth, and serve as the guide to a life hereafter. If I seem to attach to them an exaggerated significance, or to regard them as the sufficing guide of life, apart from all else that has been said before or after on the subject, I can only ask the reader to give to them a three years' study, and I cannot question that he will reach the same conclusion.

In studying and trying to realise these benign and searching regulations of life, I have naturally sought the help of the writers who are engaged in the same task—Count Tolstoi, Dr. A. B. Bruce, Mr. Latham,

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the President of Trinity Hall, Cambridge, and Canon Gore.

And yet my own book is derived not from these writers, to whom I acknowledge great obligations, but simply from the inexhaustible richness of the Lord's precepts themselves. It seems to me that, as they can never grow old, so they can never be fully explored. Coleridge once said that to restore a fading counsel of morality to its pristine lustre it is necessary only to put it into practice. And every attempt to regulate one's life by these principles of Jesus, which have been the familiar mottoes on the walls of life since life began, hung about the cradle, in the nursery and the schoolroom, in the church and in the State, furbishes their golden letters and makes them gleam with a new beauty.

I can promise my readers some delight and much profit in the perusal of this book, because it is a setting, more or less suitable for the present day, of the eternal Code of Jesus. The profit will come from the contemplation of this Code, the delight from being detained in that contemplation a little longer than if one simply read the words in the familiar pages of the New Testament. My own part in the book is simple and modest enough. My reward will be in each reader who is led to realise the supremacy and completeness of the Lord's commandments for every condition of life, for every age of the world, and above all, for himself.

ROBERT F. HORTON.

HAMPSTEAD, *Oct. 17, 1898.*

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CHAPTER I

THE COMMANDMENTS OF JESUS AS THE RULE OF LIFE

IT seems to be but very imperfectly considered, even by Christian people, that in the Commandments of our Lord we have a sufficient, authoritative, and exact rule of life. In a loose way the majority of us accept the Christian ethic and conform our conduct to its directions. But the ethic which we accept is far from being a plain and luminous law; it is misty and obscure, because it represents the intrepretations and the accretions of many centuries; it is a cumbrous system of probabilism, in which the opinions that have been held by men of very different worth are jumbled together; and the resultant decision in a particular case is a compromise between varying authorities. Every one is aware that there is a clear light from which the illumination streams, but it comes to us refracted and shadowed by the

atmosphere in which we live. The several systems of moral philosophy, even when they are tinged with Christian truth, are rather a subject of dispute for the learned than an available guide for the simple. And a large part of mankind, even with the Bible at hand, live by haphazard, risking moral life on chance decisions, or on blurred impressions of precepts which were never fully understood.

It is supposed to be one of the reliefs which the Roman Catholic Church offers to the bewildered modern mind, that in its pale conscience and life may be handed over to a spiritual director. Regular confession and the decisions of the priest are to still the strife of moral questioning and spare the soul the tumult of thought. But the true confessional is to be found in the four Gospels: there alone sits the Priest in absolution. The direction of the individual soul is a task undertaken by the High Priest Himself, and the method by which He conducts it is profound as it is simple. He has given us His commandments, plain and sure, accessible to every intelligent mind; and with His commandments He has given us Himself. *Ye are clean because of the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in me and I in you.*

If we observe the explicitness of His claim, we cannot but be amazed that the Church has not

collected His commandments and set them in a position of eminence over her altars. His commandments either include or supersede all the commandments which have come before and after Him. His commandments are the test and the guide of the true life. In keeping of them there is great reward. To obscure them is practically to abrogate them ; for they do not admit of any admixture with the prudential compromises of human ethics. And yet over the altars of the Church it is usually the Decalogue of Moses that is inscribed in letters of gold. Seldom is the law of the New Covenant added as a codicil. The Ten Commandments are admirable in their place ; as the substance of the code which the new Lawgiver annotated and transformed they have an abiding value. But how is it possible for the Church to forget that the attitude of Christ to the ancient law is expressed in the formula : "It was said to them of old time . . . but I say unto you" ? It is perfectly true that if the Ten Commandments were kept, society would be revolutionised ; the first and second of them alone would destroy Mariolatry and sweep the images out of Catholic churches ; the third and fourth would rid our ears of the blasphemies which are shouted or muttered in our streets, and would secure for the world the blessing of a genuine rest ; the fifth would be the

saving of our youth; the sixth, seventh, eighth and ninth would empty the criminal law-courts; and the tenth would cure the most withering disease of human life.

It would indeed be a calamity to remove the ten Words from our altars instead of attempting to write them on our hearts. We are told of Robertson of Irvine that in his artistic decoration of his church he was taken to task by a scandalised Presbyterian lady: "Well, Mr. Robertson, I hear you have another novelty in the kirk, you have put the Ten Commandments over the table." "We have a greater novelty than that," was the cheery reply, "we are trying to practise them."

It is then no disannulment of the ancient law which is required by a recognition of the new; it is rather the admission that "what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh" can only be done by the new law and the new Lawgiver. The old law is superseded by the new because only in that way can it be fulfilled. The commandments of Christ take precedence of the Decalogue, because until the new commandment comes the Decalogue remains a dead letter. To bring out the commandments of Christ in their isolated supremacy is therefore the first condition of discharging the obligations of the immemorial law. And our blood is upon our

own heads if we leave this simple and final code—the new Deuteronomy—hidden in the dust and lumber of the temple; we deservedly stumble at noonday if we neglect this light which lightens every man coming into the world.

Let us therefore at the outset avow our purpose. We wish to bring out our Lord's commandments, not only from the medley of ethical systems, but even from the body of His own teaching, as the guide and principle of our personal and social life.

It has been said that Jesus Christ is the incarnate conscience of the race. His precepts are the dictates of the purified conscience. His person is the power of keeping the precepts. The human conscience suffers not only from blindness, but from infirmity. As our great moralist said: "Had it strength as it has right, had it power as it has manifest authority, it would absolutely govern the world."* Our Lord not only frees the direction of moral precepts, and brings them into clear and simple lines, but, what is of even greater moment, He presents in Himself a potency of fulfilment. In Him our conscience has strength as it has right, power as it has manifest authority. In obedience to Him therefore has lain for these nineteen centuries, and must still lie, the hope of conscience absolutely governing the world.

* Butler's "Second Sermon upon Human Nature."

In attempting to study and co-ordinate His commandments we must not only bear in mind the place which He claims for them, but we must never for a moment ignore the relation which they, and the observance of them, hold to His person. *He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me. . . . If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love.** So closely are the two—the commandments and the love—interlinked that the proposition can be reversed: "*If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments.*†

The process which is here suggested may be compared to the use of the two feet in walking. The first foot advanced is a certain initial attraction to Jesus; the second foot advanced is the attempt to keep His commandments, which is the result of the attraction. But that brings forward the first foot in a fresh accession of devotion to His person, and from this results a deeper and heartier obedience to His commandments. Thus the soul marches forward by alternate steps towards God.

Let us assume, what is indeed the very general attitude of the modern world towards Christ, that we have a certain inclination towards His person and authority, which disposes us to make His commandments our rule of life, and the study of them

* John xiv. 21; xv. 10. † John xiv. 15.

our delight. *He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me.* The exact force of the words must be observed. For they are not intended to express the unquestionable truth, that a man will keep the commandments of Christ because he loves Christ, just as we commonly recognise that children will be obedient to their parents because of their love to their parents; but the words refer to the third step in the two-footed progress. "He who has and keeps my commandments," says the Lord, "is he who conceives a love for my person." In the observance of His laws love springs up to the giver of the laws. And then, to follow out the rest of the verse, love to Him ensures love from the Father and a fuller manifestation of His person. And thus, as in xv. 10, the keeping of the commandments is a guarantee of abiding in His love.

This mode of statement puts a new complexion on the Gospel and on its requirements. For it implies that love towards Christ, that love which all Christians desire, and the defect of which most have to deplore, is not so much the result of contemplating the character which is drawn in the Gospels, a very distant and difficult undertaking, or of apprehending His sacrificial death, which is the best method of producing, but is not equal to sustaining, a reasonable love, as of doing what He said; love to

Christ springs up in the path of obedience to His commandments, exacting and difficult as many of them seem.

It is one of the most beautiful traits of human nature, and a testimony to our insatiable thirst for truth, that we all give our most constant love to those who best teach us the way of life. Buddha, Socrates, Pythagoras, Zeno, or Christian teachers of any eminence and originality all through the centuries, are loved with a holy passion which passes the love of women, and triumphs over disintegrating years and the long withdrawal of death. Into all our best love enters this element, real or imagined. The young man grounds his love for a maid on the notion that she is helping him to truth of thought and life. Our friend is not the person who gives us money or society or reputation, but the person who by precept or example teaches us and advances us in the path which the instinct of the soul acclaims as right. From this wholesome spring in the human heart comes the rich reward of the true teacher. The fee that he receives, the only fee which essentially he cares to receive, is love. In sweet and dignified gratitude, the souls that he has taught gather round him. Their veneration is without servility; their devotion admits of no reversal; it is the lofty and humble salutation which is given

on the heights of truth. Accordingly it is as the Teacher of the Way that Christ wins the hearts of His disciples. From Him light falls upon the dusk and perplexity of life. As His commandments, in their searching authority, penetrate the soul, and as obedience to them transforms the inward conceptions and the outward relations with others, a profound admiration is excited towards the Lawgiver whose words are proving to be spirit and life. And in proportion as obedience to the difficult and, at first sight, impossible requirements is recognised to be the result of His own interior grace, a communication which is quite consciously received in prayer, admiration and gratitude swell into an intense and loyal passion. The invisible Christ whose commandments have directed, and whose grace has realised, this new and better life, becomes dear as the dearest friend, and dearer because in His relation to the soul there are no drawbacks or imperfections. Thus, *He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me.*

This mode of statement—and it is His own mode—sets us upon a very careful inquiry. We determine to have and to keep His commandments. The expression "He that hath my commandments" is striking and significant. It is one thing to *know* them and another to *have* them. One of our greatest

difficulties is that in a manner we know His commandments. They are more familiar to us than any other form of words. But to *have* them implies an inward grasp of their meaning and application. When Francis of Assisi heard the words of Christ in the chapel and they summoned him to a life of evangelic poverty and service, he *had* them.* There were doubtless many present at the same time who never *had* them, and yet distinctly heard and knew them. When Augustine in obedience to the voice "Take and read," turned again to the words in Romans which he had just been reading, *Not in chambering and wantonness*, he *had* for the first time what he had heard and read without having many times before. And to *have* the commandments of Christ is not always the work of a moment. Now and again comes a happy inspiration. By diligent testing they are grasped and understood. But for the careless and the worldly the commandments of Christ seem elusive, like iridescent sunbeams upon falling waters; the rainbow lights come and go. If we are to *have* these commandments of Christ, we must arise and grasp them with both hands. Plain as they are there is a transcendental element in

* "Provide neither gold nor silver, &c." "Here is what I wanted," he cried suddenly; "here is what I have sought." *Francis of Assisi.* By Mrs. Oliphant, p. 39.

them. Many of the most dominant tendencies of our nature are enlisted against them. No legislation disturbs vested interests as His does. And while no Christian can brazen it out to refuse a commandment of Christ, when he *has* it, every Christian is exposed to the subtle temptation of never really having it, never personally facing and grasping it. To *hear* may make but small demands; to *have* claims immediate obedience.

And what opposes the most serious obstacle to the possession and keeping of these commandments is not the repudiation which is made by the world, but the accumulation of tradition and the admixture of other codes which are offered by the Church. The clear commandments of the Gospel are not denied, but they are overlaid. The Roman Church, for instance, does not repudiate His commandments, though she counts it no part of the Christian life to meditate upon them, and to search them out for oneself in the Gospels; but she presents to the soul a crowd of commandments, not His, for which she claims an equal authority. The Protestant Churches by no means repudiate His commandments, but they lay stress on other features of the Christian teaching, and reduce the commandments of their Lord to the position of a code which forms a part of a fuller law. The result is that the practical precepts of

Christendom, by which we are called upon to direct our lives, are very far from being the commandments of Christ pure and simple. These commandments are used as points of colour in a tesselated floor; they are not set by themselves in the breastplate of the High Priest, and acknowledged as the Urim and Thummim by which our course is to be decided.

We have to draw the distinction between "the commandment of the Lord" (1 Cor. xiv. 37) and "the precepts and doctrines of men" (Col. ii. 22) not as if the latter were without value, not forgetting that God has spoken to the world "in the prophets by divers portions and in divers manners," but recognising that when He has spoken to us by His Son, "whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds," the commandments which the Son gave have an authority which is all their own, and in keeping of *His* commandments there must be great reward: "See that ye refuse not Him that speaketh."

And now, if we attempt to put together and to study His commandments, we shall do well to realise from the beginning that, few and plain as they appear, they are, like the judgments of the Lord, a great deep (Ps. xxxvi. 6). We can neither compass nor sound them. Their special note is that they apply with new meaning to successive ages, and

cannot be exhausted. They are essentially, as an able writer calls them, *seed-thoughts.** The most we can expect to do is to find what application they have to us and to our age. And we must not be surprised if, from time to time as we study them, we find ourselves moving in worlds unrealised, gazing into eternity, rapt to the summit of the Mount of God. It is given to each one of us like Moses to receive the law from the lips and the finger of God, to acquire the radiance from the divine converse, and to carry the new decalogue on the fleshy tables of the heart. But to us as to Moses come glimpses into lands which we cannot enter, and we have to wait for the mysterious transfer into the world beyond death in order to look into the perfect law of liberty, and to know as we are known.

* Rev. Henry Latham, M.A., *Pastor Pastorum*, p. 30.

CHAPTER II

THE FIRST COMMANDMENT

IN the Code of Jesus the first commandment is: *Repent.* This fact marks the difference between the Code of Jesus and the Decalogue, or any other system of moral legislation. The Ten Commandments present a noble portrait of the virtuous and religious life. The Stoical picture of the Sage leaves little to desire as a summary of what men ought to do. But the system of Jesus, without any theorising, starts from the position that we are not in the normal state, that we are very far gone from original righteousness, and that the first step in moral regeneration must be a change.

The commandment presents many difficulties and is a call to vigorous action; but at any rate it is full of hope. It assumes that men can change, that they can become what they are not. It frankly recognises evil, and as confidently assumes that it can be overcome.

Contrast this first commandment of our Saviour with the constant tenor of Stoical thought—that doctrine which marks the highest level to which the soul had risen before Christ came.

"Protest—till you burst," exclaims Marcus Aurelius, "men will go on all the same." Or "think of being shocked at the fig-tree bearing figs! You have just as little right, remember, to be shocked at the world bearing the produce proper to it. Shame on the physician or the pilot who is shocked at a case of fever or a contrary wind." On the other hand, "From that time began Jesus to preach and to say Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. iv. 17).

If the command to repent is misunderstood, as it was by Luther at first, it is depressing and even terrifying. "There frowns the awful precipice of righteousness," it seems to say: "Ascend it!" And the answer of the despairing spirit is that foot of man never scaled that inaccessible height. But when we come to perceive what repentance is, and what it means on the lips of Jesus, we recognise that it strikes the note of hope. If repentance is possible we need not despair; and when *He* commands it all can repent. The image under which the Lord Himself conceived it is that of the Prodigal Son. He does not analyse repentance in a tiresome theolo-

gical way, but in the most vivid colours He depicts a man in the act of repentance. The wanderer from home, in a far country, starving and disgraced, stung by the thought of the order and plenty in the father's house, reaches this resolution, as he turns yearning eyes homeward, "I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before thee." That picture of repentance is more illuminating than any definition we can give of the term. Strike at the heart of it, and you find that repentance is the discovery that you have lost your Father, God—the recognition that it is your own fault, the determination to return to Him. The elder brother, on the other hand, was unrepentant. He was not aware that he had lost his father, because he had continued formally in the father's house; that any fault lay at his door had not occurred to him, and consequently there was no "repentance from dead works"; in place of the determination to return to the father, there was the pettish determination to remain without. The unrepentant brother is the warning to those who flatter themselves that they need no repentance; the repentant brother is the encouragement to the worst of sinners. Whosoever is willing to recognise his alienation from the Father, to confess his own culpability, and to turn, is able to do so. A pathetic

beauty is thrown over this act of humiliation and restoration. "Of all acts," says Carlyle, "is not for man repentance the most divine? In repentance is man purified. It is the grand Christian act."

In the beautiful picture by Mr. Swan, which is now one of the gems of the Tate Gallery, this tender and appealing note is struck. Look at the Prodigal, clad in skins, seated there despondent, sunk in meditation, while the poppies of carnal slumber wave about his swine-troughs. But look also how the horizon is purple with hope, and seems to beckon and call, that he should arise and seek his father's house beyond the distant hills. That is noble art, in which a painter seeks to realise and to repeat the first of our Lord's commandments, the more noble because he succeeds in giving to the sorrowful act of repentance a beauty more pathetic and alluring than all the pomp of pride or the splendour of human righteousness.

But now we must observe the peculiar intonation which the word Repentance has on the lips of Jesus. At first this command of the Saviour seems to be the bare repetition of the words of John the Baptist. Indeed in the account of Matthew the words of the two are identical: Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand (Matt. iii. 2; iv. 17). But when we get back to the more original source in Mark, we

find a most significant difference. The first commandment of Jesus, given in full, is this: *The time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye and believe in the Gospel* (Mark i. 15).

This is the difference between the forerunner and the Saviour, between him who baptized with water and Him who baptized with the Holy Ghost and with fire. For John repentance meant the surrender of evil practices; for Jesus repentance meant the acceptance of a saving power. John's message was noble, and up to a certain point hopeful. He drew the picture of sin, and summoned the worst to escape from sin and to bring forth fruits worthy of repentance. But, apart from his announcement of the worthier One who was coming after him, his message had all the pensive sterility of the teaching of the Prophets or of the Stoics. It was a call to a change which could only be made by those who were changed—a repentance which consisted in fruits worthy of repentance, the old hopeless circle of human aspiration and failure.

> What then? What rests?
> Try what repentance can! What can it not?
> Yet what can it, when one can not repent?

It is the fault of all ethical systems, except the perfect one, that they first guess the good from the

best they know, and then expect the ordinary man to become like the extraordinary. They analyse the motives which operate to produce goodness, and summon the sanctions of reason to apply the motives. But Seneca cannot influence Nero, nor can the philosophy of Hobbes regenerate the court of Charles II. The call to repentance has little but a speculative interest, unless some power is adduced which enables evil men not only to discover evil but to renounce it, which brings into the nature corrupted and weakened by sin a regenerating energy. Unless the command to repent comes *with power*, it might as well, in a world so essentially fallen, not come at all.

Now it is this element which appears for the first time in our Lord's promulgation of His command, Repent. *The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand—i.e.*, a new era is dawning, a new power is entering human life, the reign of God as opposed to the reign of the human will. It is in view of this manifestation of divine authority and goodness that men are now called upon everywhere to repent, and the adequate motive force is supplied in the addition : *Believe the Gospel.*

The simple meaning of the Greek word μετάνοια, which is rendered Repentance, is an after-thought, or change of purpose. And the essential idea of

repentance is a reconsideration of facts which leads to a different course of action. Dwelling upon this meaning of the word, we get the following change in the intonation when Jesus took up the summons of His predecessor. John, and all the prophets and moral philosophers said: Your life is evil, your habits are bad, your motives are wrong, your heart is sinful. You must effect a change; cease to do evil, and learn to do well; put away your iniquity from before your eyes; break off your sins. But Jesus said: You need good news, you need a Saviour; you have lost heart and hope; you suppose that you must save yourselves; the change you require is that from self-trust and its consequent despair to trust in another and its consequent hope, from the sorrowful facts of human failure and sin to the joyful truth of the kingdom of God: when I call therefore for repentance, or reconsideration, I present to you the good news of the kingdom, and I ask you to believe it.

In a word, the call to repentance assumed at once a new meaning when it was uttered by one who came bearing a Gospel, and who was in His own person the Saviour that the Gospel announced. This new cry rings along the weary terraces of purgatory, where souls are engaged in the endless task of self-purification; it thrills a hopeless world;

it gives a message which the Christian preacher should never tire of delivering, because in striking contrast both with the pre-Christian doctrine and with the Catholic perversion of the Gospel, it comes in demonstration of the Spirit and of power. The time is fulfilled, the kingdom of God has come, and a divine Saviour, giving the command to repent, implies that the human soul may look unto Him and be saved, may attach itself to His redemptive person, and, renouncing the vain attempt to make itself good, may be engrafted in that vine-stock of perfect goodness and fruitfulness which is tended by the hand of God. Thus the commandment to repent on the lips of Jesus is by no means addressed only to sinners and human outcasts, but just as much to those unhappy persons who are going about to establish a righteousness of their own, and to those who in a Christian country, and even a Christian Church, having missed the surprising message of the grace of God, labour under the hopeless delusion that they can restore themselves to their Father's house, and work out a salvation which has not first been imparted to them.

Why is it that so many people live in habitual disobedience to all the commandments of Christ? It is because they have not obeyed the first, which is the gateway into the house of obedience. He

bids us first to repent, because without that as the beginning there can be no progress; any self-delusion there vitiates the whole attempt at the Christian life. Until we have turned from our own thoughts to God's, from our own righteousness to His, from our own fair promises and intentions to the life-giving power of a present Saviour, we can make no advance in righteousness or love or peace. Repent, therefore, and believe the Gospel, not only you who are evidently and avowedly prodigal sons, but you also who occupy the chilling and envious position of the elder son, self-righteous and self-justifying, loving not at all because, indeed, you are not forgiven.

Now, that we have gained some insight into our Lord's meaning of the command to repent is proved by the passages in St. John which correspond to this preaching of repentance in the Synoptics. In the fourth Gospel we are not told that Jesus began His ministry by preaching the message of repentance. On the other hand, we have two individual instances which admirably illustrate both how He preached and what He meant by repentance. When the general call to repentance brought souls to Him inquiring the way, we must suppose that He dealt with them according to the examples given in the narratives of Nicodemus and of the Samaritan woman.

Nicodemus, a reputable religious man, a teacher of others, is called upon to make a change of so radical a character that it can only be described as a new birth. And when in amazement he asks how this can be done, Jesus directs his eyes to His own person with the assurance that as the Israelites were healed by looking at the brazen serpent, so whosoever believed on Him should have everlasting life. Here, as in the Synoptics, the call is to repentance, though the word is not mentioned. The repentance consists in directing heart and mind to Jesus Himself, and the result is stated to be a new spiritual birth.

The other instance furnishes proof of the same truth. The woman at the well, a religious character in her way, was by no means irreproachable in her life. The purpose of Jesus is first to elicit and arouse the conscience, and He does not rest until she is in an attitude of inquiry and desire. Here the difference between John the Baptist and his Lord emerges. John would have said: Break off your connection with the man who is not your husband, and so bring forth fruits worthy of repentance. But Jesus drew her attention entirely to Himself, and made the announcement that He was the expected Messiah. That led at once to repentance, a repentance not to be repented of, and the repentant

woman started off in eager joy to bring others to her Lord.

Probably the fourth Evangelist would sum up all that the Master said on repentance in the question and answer: "What must we do that we may work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent" (John vi. 28, 29). The works of God can only be wrought, the commandments of the new law can only be kept, when the person of the Saviour has been realised and accepted. Christian repentance is that reconsideration, usually brought about by the presentation of Christ, which casts the soul upon Christ, and expects His grace to transform and to build up as well as to pardon and cleanse.

Some instances may make the truth clearer still. We saw in the first chapter how the beginning of Augustine's spiritual life was the grasp of the commandment, in the garden at Milan, "Not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and jealousy." The words which follow in Rom. xiii. 14 are: "But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ." That this was the real turning-point for Augustine is clear in his lifelong contention for the doctrine of Grace. Pelagius seemed to him an enemy of the truth because the doctrine of Pelagius led us back, as it

has actually led the Roman Church back, into the condition which precedes repentance. In the Roman doctrine of repentance even to-day there is no recognition of the fact that the soul in turning to Christ can "put on the Lord Jesus." The good works which the soul contributes to effect its salvation are the material, if not the efficient, cause of salvation, and as a just judgment must recognise their insufficiency for the purpose, the cleansing flames of purgatory are imagined to do what man cannot do here. But in the experience and doctrine of St. Augustine, which follow on the lines of the New Testament, the sufficiency of divine grace, and the possibility of receiving Christ by faith as the power of an endless life, are the pith and power of Christian repentance. The Roman Church has substituted penance for repentance and baptism for regeneration, and there is, in consequence, no part of the world where Christ's first commandment is less obeyed or known than the countries where Catholicism perpetuates its ancient reign.

To pass to another instance, it is interesting that the first light which brought repentance to Luther's soul came from Staupitz, the vicar-general of the Augustinian Order in Germany. It was he who said to the troubled soul anxious about sin, tor-

mented by his inability to do any penance which would remove its guilt: "Look at the wounds of Jesus Christ, to the blood that He has shed for you; it is there that the grace of God will appear unto you." The repentance, in Christ's sense of the word, occurred in Luther's life, not when he was chastising himself for his sins, and seeking to win pardon in that way, but when he was led to believe in the forgiveness of sins which was freely granted to him through faith in the blood of Christ.

But perhaps we may fortify our thought by two instances more modern. Tolstoi has told us the story of his early life in the heart of Russian society, that society which he has painted with an unsparing hand in *Anna Karénina*. In the character of Levin, well-meaning, blundering, and ineffectual—the only character in the book which is not bad (and he is stupid)—Tolstoi found that he had unconsciously described himself. Startled by his own self-portraiture, and perturbed by his own aimlessness and misery, he set about the inquiry after religious truth. He went to the authorities of his own Church; he read books; he inquired, so he says, into the teaching of Protestant Churches; but none could give him any help. And then he turned to Jesus Christ and His commandments. It cannot be said that Tolstoi recognises the place which repentance holds

in the evangelic code; but on the other hand it cannot be denied that the great writer's discovery of Jesus and of His words was a repentance in the evangelic sense. He turned from the life of empty gaiety and self-indulgence; and from that time he made it his business to study and to understand the teaching of Jesus, while with a fearless consistency he put into practice all that he understood. That is undoubtedly repentance in the Christian sense, though it may seem to some of us that Tolstoi has not "ceased to speak of the first principles of Christ, and pressed on unto perfection" (Heb. vi. 1).

But the most striking example of Christian repentance which has been presented to us in recent years is that of George John Romanes. His biography reveals a blameless and beautiful life devoted to the interests of science. But in his earlier days he drifted from faith, and, under the pseudonym of *Physicus*, published a candid examination of Theism, which refuted the whole series of arguments for a belief in God. It is evident that from that time forward a gradual change began in his intellectual position. He set himself to refute his own book, and though he did not live to publish the refutation, the "Thoughts on Religion," issued after his death by Canon Gore, put us in possession of a most remarkable *μετάνοια*

or change of mind. He reached the conclusion: "As pure agnosticism must allow that reason is incompetent to adjudicate *a priori* for or against Christian miracles, including the Incarnation, so it must further allow that, if they ever took place, reason can have nothing to say against their being all of one piece with causation in general. Hence, so far as reason is concerned, pure agnosticism must allow that it is only the event which can ultimately prove whether Christianity is true or false. But the individual cannot wait for this empirical determination. What, then, is he to do? The unbiased answer of pure agnosticism ought reasonably to be, in the words of John Hunter, 'Do not think; try.' That is, in this case, try the only experiment available — the experiment of faith."* We have it on the authority of Mrs. Romanes and of Canon Gore, that he tried the only experiment available, and found peace in believing. It was a repentance at the eleventh hour, but it was the more genuine because it had taken many years to travel from the position of materialistic atheism to the discovery of the Person who came preaching: *Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.*

This, then, is the first of the commandments of Jesus; one might call it the introduction to them,

* *Thoughts on Religion*, p. 167.

which corresponds to the *Shema* that the Jews use as a prelude to the Law. In the place of "Hear, O Israel, the Lord thy God is one God," or in place of the cry "God is one, and Mahomet is His prophet," the law of Jesus places at the beginning the person of a Saviour and the call to trust Him. It is this which makes the commandments of Jesus sweet, and the study of them a delight. We are dealing with the highest ethical standard that the world knows; but we are dealing with the lawgiver who not only embodies His precepts in His own person, but has supernatural methods of realising them in the hearts and lives of those who believe in Him.

CHAPTER III

THE SECOND COMMANDMENT: FOLLOW ME

Matt. iv. 19; *viii.* 22; *ix.* 9

THE account of the meeting between Jesus and His earliest Disciples in the first chapter of John is, as Professor Bruce says,* "idyllic in its simplicity and would only be spoiled by a commentary." They were not formally introduced; they drew together; they brought relatives and friends into the new circle by some strong attraction of affinity. But the command to follow Him, which was given some time after when they had all returned to Galilee, is one which demands a very careful consideration; for, in the first place, we do not see at a glance all that was involved in obeying it for the Apostles themselves, and in the second place we have to determine in what sense the commandment applies to, and has to be obeyed by, us. His first command to men is: Repent. His second

* *Training of the Twelve*, p. 4.

is : *Follow me.* Whatever may be the literal meaning, the words enlarge and become mystical. To follow Him expresses something which goes far beyond our senses. The commonest words, used by Him, break into flames, or melt into pervasive unguents. If to repent was to trust Him as a Saviour, to follow Him must signify the apprehension of Him as the model of life, the guide of conduct, the means of salvation. The apparently simple call, Follow me, assumes an immeasurable significance.

There was a great simplicity in the command as it came at the first. The young fishermen from Galilee had seen Him by the Jordan, and on their return home they were meditating on Him and His strange attraction. His summons to them was not unprepared.

Long time with Zebedee
They dragged their rough nets through the darkling sea ;
Till Jesus marked the power unmarked before,
And called them from their black boat on the shore
To fish for men.*

And they straightway left the nets and followed Him.

Or one was busy in a sordid and unpatriotic calling ; but his mind was perhaps full of the wonderful raising of Jairus' daughter.†

* *Sonnets* of Edward Calcraft Lefroy.

† Professor Bruce shows that the raising of Jairus' daughter, though narrated by Matthew after his call, occurred before. *Training of the Twelve*, p. 23.

And as on that bright day beside his board
He counted tribute, from the city gate
Came one with strangest summons : Follow me.
'Twas Jesus named of Nazareth. And he,
Knowing his life now called and consecrate,
Rose up—the elect historian of the Lord.*

To follow Him meant the renunciation of the earthly calling in order to join a company of itinerant preachers who were to go everywhere announcing the kingdom of heaven.

Possibly the commandment in this simple and intelligible form would make too great a demand, and men to whom it was addressed would, reluctantly enough, disobey. One, resolved to do some good thing to inherit eternal life, found that he would have to sell all that he had and give to the poor, and so follow Jesus; and he went away sorrowful, for he was one that had great possessions (Matt. xix. 22). Or another would find a pious excuse for not leaving home on the errand of enthusiasm; he would wait until his father was dead, and then he would consider it, but not now.†

It was all very obvious. Jesus was calling men

* Lefroy.

† In the unchanging East the same mode of speech is used to-day. A missionary in the Lebanon relates that sixteen years ago he was coming to London. A young Syrian had expressed his wish to come with him, but as the time drew near he shrank back. The missionary

to leave parents and home in order to engage in a mission. A decisive and visible step was demanded. When a man arose and followed, or when he refused to follow, there could be no mistake about the fact. It was like enlisting in a regiment or setting out upon a pilgrimage. They who obeyed the summons became the companions of Jesus during the three years of His life, and they followed Him, or were willing to follow, whithersoever He went.

When He was dead they returned naturally to their fishing boats or their other avocations. Having followed Him to death, their task was done.

But was it? That is the question. *Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow me.* Evidently He is speaking words which have a deeper and wider application than that itinerancy round Galilee and up to Jerusalem. Those simple men understood the words in a more spiritual sense. They continued to follow Him when He was out of sight, to pass out of sight themselves still following Him. Here is a suggestion of the truth that is illustrated in the Holy Grail:

urging him to come, he said, "Suffer me first to bury my father," though his father was standing there hale and strong. It is a proverbial excuse for evading an uncomfortable duty.

> But I, Sir Arthur, saw the Holy Grail,
> I saw the Holy Grail and heard a cry:
> "O Galahad, and O Galahad, follow me."

Here is that visionary, commanding experience of life, the power of the Ideal. A truth, a thought, a person, crosses your path, and from that moment onwards you are a different being. You know that a call has come; henceforth you must be, else sinning greatly, a dedicated spirit. In the words of Merlin, you must follow the gleam. It is perfectly plain that the first Disciples partly comprehended before and fully realised after the Crucifixion that the command which had come to them was for this life and for the life to come. For us obviously the command can only apply in this ideal sense.

We come, then, to two very practical questions, which must be answered plainly, or else our Christian life will fall into fanaticism or fade away in a dream. How is the following of Jesus to be conceived when the literal itinerancy is no longer a matter of consideration? And how is the following to be squared with the duties and claims of the present life?

I.

To follow Jesus has sometimes been regarded as an imitation of His earthly life recorded in the Gospels; and the beautiful instance of St. Francis has given a certain colour to that idea, which not even the rapid and profound demoralisation of the Franciscan Order has been able to obliterate. Or to follow Jesus has been interpreted as an obedience to some of His ethical requirements in a literal and uncompromising spirit. The genius of Tolstoi has shed a lustre on this interpretation, while the fact that it would lead to the dissolution of human society is not felt as an objection when society has become so corrupt and hopeless as it is in orthodox Russia. But these crude attempts to give a prosaic meaning to the infinite poetry of Jesus are by no means a sufficient account of His intention. If we confine ourselves strictly to the limits of the four Gospels—and it is unnecessary to go beyond—the footsteps of the Son of Man lead farther than the literalists see. They lead decisively and even rapidly to the Cross, and through the grave and into the world beyond. To follow Him, therefore, must on any showing mean more than imitation of His conduct and obedience to His commands; for such

imitation and obedience involve what He calls eternal life—that is to say, they set a man on a spiritual rather than an earthly track, fixing his affections on things above and drawing him towards the invisible city.

It is important to avoid that mysticism in which the plain sense of the Gospel disappears, but it is equally important to notice that the real sense of the Gospel only appears when the mystical halo is about it.

To follow Jesus means partly to find our way into the future world, as He says in the opening of the fourteenth chapter of John, but it means also to enter now into that spiritual world where He lived and moved and worked while He was on earth. He moved in this present world with freedom ; its customs, laws, requirements, interest and joys sat lightly on Him. No one ever loved the aspect of earth and heaven more than He did, but no one was ever so serenely and joyously independent of what He called *the world.* He was quite unworldly. Something which plays a great part in human nature —the love of money, the desire of reputation, the passion for pleasure—was dead in Him. Something which plays a very flickering and elusive part in human nature—the certainty of God, the presence of the eternal life, the openness to the eye of God,

and the heavenly judgment—was alive and intense in Him. His wandering and homeless life, His preaching and working of miracles, His suffering and death and visible resurrection were the accidents of His personal mission. To follow Him in these details must be partially or, in some cases, wholly impossible. But the essential and abiding factor was the life hidden with God, the movement at the bidding of the Invisible, the consequent untrammelled freedom in relation to the things of sense, the complete victory over the world.

It is impossible to imagine Jesus attaching any artificial importance to rank or position, to education or culture or wealth. When a learned and prominent lawyer proposed to follow Him, He declined the allegiance by observing that He was without a home. Any one who attached importance to earthly comfort or station could *not* follow Him, because to follow Him must mean to adopt His view of such matters. It is equally impossible to imagine Him despising a human being. He treats every man and woman with respect, recognises the freedom of the will, appeals to conscience and reason, and eschews coercion. The standards of another world are present in all His estimates and actions; the power of an endless life is palpitating in all His words. Now, it is this spiritual walk of Jesus that

He bids us follow. His commandment is exactly and happily paraphrased by an Apostle in the words, *Walk in the spirit, and ye shall not obey the lusts of the flesh.*

And accordingly the most searching account of the imitation of Christ which occurs outside of the New Testament, that of Thomas à Kempis, says little or nothing of the earthly life, or of the mere ethics of the Gospel. The following is not a journey on the roads of Galilee or up to Jerusalem, nor is it a treading in the mill of ecclesiastical or conventual regulations; but it is the pilgrimage in His footsteps, and by His personal guidance, from the region of time and sense, which is called the World, into the region of eternity and spirit, which is called Heaven. The Cross is a fact of the spirit; the Crucifixion is an experience; the world beyond is a realisation.

It is therefore impossible to speak of *following Christ* in the evangelic sense, if the Cross is removed or if His divinity is denied. To follow Him means to effect a journey from flesh to spirit, from man to God, from sin to holiness. And He whom we follow is also the Way that we tread; His Incarnation uniting the two spheres, and His Atonement reconciling them, are the two elements which alone make the following either possible or useful.

II.

The second question which we proposed, *How is the following to be squared with the duties and claims of the present life?* has received a partial answer in the attempt to answer the first. While the following is conceived in a literalist way, the world, supposing the present order of things to continue, cannot be even asked to obey the command. The life of the first disciples in Galilee was necessary, but if all had lived it the fields would have been untilled and the fish would have been uncaught. Was the command *Follow me* addressed, then, only to those who should discharge the functions of the missionary or the evangelist or the preacher? Did Nicodemus or Joseph of Arimathæa not follow Him because they continued their duties as Sanhedrists? Was Zacchæus rejected because he remained a *publicanus?* Or, indeed, did the first disciples cease to follow because on the morrow of the Resurrection they said "We go a fishing," returning to the ordinary ways of life?

Observe, there has always been a tendency to conceive the commandment in this way. But it is radically false, and is destructive of the thought of Jesus. St. Francis was a noble enthusiast, but he

cannot have studied the Gospels. The religious Orders were animated by a fine motive, but to them the New Testament must have been a subject for illuminated missals rather than the guide of thought and conduct. That distinction between religious and secular which really destroys the meaning of both is the legacy of these delusions. The daring dogma of Rome that some of the commands of Jesus are counsels of perfection, and not necessary for salvation—in such a sense optional that they who obey them are doing more than is actually required of them, and even storing up merit for the less deserving—is a result of shutting the eyes to the whole spirit, and even the direct language, of Christ's Gospel (Luke xvii. 10).

No, if any man ever understood the permanent meaning of the command to follow Christ, it was St. Paul, who, not having known Him after the flesh, had the task of realising how Christ was to be known and copied in the spirit. And it is he who, after discussing the indifference of the status or avocation of those who are called, sums up the discussion with the words: "Brethren, let each man, wherein he was called, therein abide with God" (1 Cor. vii. 24).

The following of Christ, in the course of history, means a spiritual walk according to the principles,

and under the direct spiritual guidance, of Jesus. He went away that He might come in the Spirit, and be with His followers to the end. He did not propose His own person or His own works as the limit of their conduct, but gave them rather to understand that in His spiritual return they should be led into new developments of the Christ-life (John i. 50; xiv. 12).

"Wherein the man was called, therein he was to abide with God." Whatever might be his vocation or function in the world, that was to be made Christly. The sovereign would follow Christ, not by renouncing the crown and adopting the garb and function of the travelling preacher, but by learning tc rule as Christ would rule if He were an earthly sovereign. The workman was not to leave his bench or his tools, but to use them as Jesus did in the days of His preparation. In every condition of life one might be in Christ by faith, with the result of making that condition Christian. Thus men should live in the world, and do their work heartily for the world, and yet not be of the world. They could live in an attitude of genial, not churlish, detachment from passing things; they could, absorbed in the invisible Christ and engaged in a perpetual intercourse with Him, as truly convey His purpose and energy to the world as the branch

of the vine in connection with the stem bears the fruit of the vine.

Thus St. Paul became a fisher of men, not by giving up his trade as a tent-maker and his profession as a scholar, but by diligently pursuing them both. We gather that Peter was a preacher of some power; but for aught we know the other Apostles carried out their apostleship not by preaching, but in more ordinary ways. When the corrupt notion emerged that only a certain order of men were called to be fishers of men, legend had to busy itself by finding spheres of preaching for the Twelve in remote and improbable parts of the world. But with all its ingenuity legend could not allot all the Twelve to these imaginary districts. Consequently we have this beautiful probability, that the majority of those who first followed Jesus, and companied with Him in the days of His flesh, carried out their mission of following Him in the ordinary occupations of life. The Lord's brethren, brought before the Emperor Domitian as possible aspirants to the purple, were found to be working men with horny hands.

And this is the true Christian idea of fishers of men. Putting aside the work of the missionary who carries the Gospel for the first time to a new country, the most notable fishers of men are not preachers and teachers, but mothers, fathers, men of business,

artisans, the women of the home—people who, in the occupation in which they were called, follow Jesus, and draw insensibly all who know them to their Lord.

No one ever more truly followed Christ than the King Arthur of legend, or King Alfred of real history. While on the other hand Edward the Confessor and Henry the Sixth, who tried to be monks rather than kings, missed their mark, and followed their own fancies rather than Christ. Oliver Cromwell followed Christ, not so much in the rude homilies which he addressed to his soldiers or his Parliaments, as in that patient and laborious grasp of the covenants, which made his whole conduct, whether as captain or Protector, a strenuous attempt to bring the principles of Jesus into the government of a modern State. Gladstone has taken his permanent place in history as a follower of Christ for the same reason; his theological writings are an accident; his ecclesiastical theories were such as have often been held without any religious result; but his life was a humble imitation of Christ in the sense of Thomas à Kempis, and now when the strife of parties is hushed we all recognise that he was constantly endeavouring to act as Christ would do if he were Chancellor of the Exchequer, leader of the House, or First Minister of the Crown.

Cairns showed how in following Jesus a man

might reach the woolsack. Samuel Morley showed how following Jesus, scrupulously and tenderly, a man might become a merchant-prince. The literalist sees in these examples only a glaring contrast between successful men and those simple peasants who first heard the call beside the Syrian Sea. But go to the root of the matter, and you find that following Jesus is a principle and method of life which will make any function or service in a complicated society an element in the kingdom of God. And the call which sounded so primitive and idyllic, there by the Jordan at the Baptism of John, proves to be a principle applicable to the highest developments of human life. Not only is it compatible with civilisation ; it has in a true sense made the civilisation, in which we live—a civilisation which is the best the world has known because it is a following of Jesus, and is defective and disastrous only because it is so imperfect a following of Jesus, and has so constantly forgotten to go afresh to the sources and to learn for each succeeding age in what the following of Jesus consists *now*.

Our study of the other commandments must fill in, but cannot overstep, this great initial commandment, Follow me. And when we give ourselves loyally to that study we shall renounce the regretful murmur of our day :

Unchanging law binds all,
And nature all we see:
Thou art a star far off, too far,
Too far to follow Thee!

O heavy cross—of faith
In what we cannot see!
As once of yore Thyself restore,
And help to follow Thee!

In meditating on His commandments we draw near to Him and He draws near to us. The only way of following Him is revealed from within:

If not as once Thou camest
In true humanity,
Come yet as guest within the breast
That burns to follow Thee.

CHAPTER IV

THE IDEAL CHARACTER

AS a frontispiece to that code of the kingdom which we call the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus sketched in outlines the ideal character. This is the significance of the Beatitudes. Or perhaps it would be more correct to say that, assuming the character which all men are agreed to call excellent, He added eight traits which would distinguish those who by repenting and following Him should enter the kingdom of God.

He assumes what are called the Cardinal Virtues—Justice, Prudence, Fortitude, and Temperance. What all men admit it is not necessary to specify. He adds the qualities which are overlooked or discredited. Perhaps with a little ingenuity these added qualities could be connected with the cardinal virtues; for in a sense it is the true Justice to hunger and thirst after justice and to be persecuted for the sake of justice (*δικαιοσύνη*, which is translated righteousness,

is the Greek word for justice, Matt. v. 6, 10); it is the true Prudence to be poor in spirit and to be a peacemaker; it is the true Fortitude to mourn and to be meek; and it is the true Temperance to be pure and to show mercy. The eight traits which He adds would be valueless without the four cardinal virtues, and would indeed not exist apart from them. But He does not think it necessary to point out what He assumes; for as a matter of fact, by approaching the ideal character on another side, and developing the fully recognised virtues from the hidden virtues which are seldom recognised, He is striking the note of the Law of the Kingdom of Heaven. He would probably say, that He also approves of the virtues which every one admires—courage, generosity, geniality, cheerfulness under depressing circumstances, loyalty to friends, faithfulness as a father or a husband, patriotism, humanity, and the rest. But such persons as exhibit these virtues cannot be called blessed, or regarded as ideal characters, unless at the foundation of their nature are these subtle qualities of the kingdom of heaven which the careless judgment of the world ignores or even condemns.

In drawing out, therefore, the ideal character of Jesus, we must be careful to show how it implies or includes the more popular virtues, while it must be

our constant purpose to realise how the popular conceptions are modified and transformed by approaching the ideal from this unexpected side. Jesus perfectly illustrates in Himself the qualities He commends, and a thorough study of His character reveals all the qualities, unmentioned by Him, which every one has learnt to love. On the other hand, the world does not admire Jesus; its standard is too false and superficial; the root qualities which produce the virtues it professes to admire are not in its eyes truly desirable. What it admires is the show of goodness rather than the reality. When it sees goodness embodied in Jesus it revolts. Justice, Prudence, Fortitude, and Temperance—yes, dilate on the beauty and advantages of these! But when it comes to the point, choose Barabbas rather than Jesus. It praises the just man in the abstract, but follows Napoleon in the concrete. Prudence is the subject of its moral lectures, but the object of its emulation is a lavish millionaire. Fortitude it sings to the skies in military heroes, but despises in the martyrs of truth. Temperance it commends in theory, but in its heart it follows with a leer wine-bibbing, gluttony, and lust. In a word, nothing so effectively exposes the hypocrisy of the world as this ideal character of Jesus. If He had dwelt on the popular virtues, which are the theme of moral

declamations, the world would have gone with Him, though those popular virtues cannot *really* exist without these hidden qualities; but when He exalts these hidden qualities, which are the proper springs of even those popular virtues, He brings home to the world its radical insincerity. If the world sincerely loved virtue it would love Jesus, and would agree that the truly blessed are the poor in spirit, the mourners, the meek, the hungerers after righteousness, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers, the persecuted for righteousness' sake.

But before we endeavour to combine the features which our Lord traces it is necessary to clear the meaning of the terms from some of the false associations which time has gathered around them.

"Poor in spirit" is apt to be mistaken for "poor-spirited." But the clue to the expression is found in the parallel from St. Luke (vi. 20–22), where He addresses the disciples personally instead of laying down a general proposition: Blessed are ye poor. That is to say, He does not praise poverty as such, still less does He refer to what we mean by poor-spiritedness; but He congratulates those who like the disciples have exchanged earthly wealth for the possession of the kingdom of God. Men who fill their lives with the pursuit and acquisition of wealth acquire a certain temper or spirit which is incom-

patible with the kingdom. Their god is Mammon, or the spirit of the world. On the other hand, men who have come to Christ, and accepted the kingdom of God, must, whatever their earthly possessions, be in spirit poor. What have they which they have not received, or which they may not at any moment lose? Who causes them to differ from their brethren? They use without abusing; they spend not for themselves, but others; they do not despise the poor, or allow so inconstant an element as earthly possessions to enter into their estimate of character. But in humble dependence on God, they treat all that they have as His, and seek to know His will in the use of it. This is the condition of soul which Jesus describes by the phrase "poor in spirit."

It is indeed a *naïve* misunderstanding which glorifies poverty as such, or makes a vow of poverty a counsel of perfection. Such a misunderstanding reveals a complete failure to see the very spirit which lies at the heart of all Christ's teaching.

Poverty in itself is not admirable. Mr. Morrison's *Tales of Mean Streets* and *Child of the Jago*, and Mr. Maughan's *Lisa of Lambeth*, careful studies of London poverty, are wholesome reminders that poverty may easily be allied with the worst of vices. The filthy, demoralised debauchees of the Jago or of Lambeth are what our Lord would

probably call "rich in spirit." That is to say, they only want the money to exhibit all the vices which disgrace the wealthy and idle classes. So far as their means go, they are worse than those who by their virtues are better off. It is an awful feature of the last-named book that, in the sordid and degraded street with which Mr. Maughan makes us familiar, the only gleam of love or charm comes from a shameless adultery, a vice which, by comparison with the other vices, has a certain putrescent beauty. It is well to understand that there is no virtue in poverty, just as there is no virtue in riches. But there are certain qualities of humility, diligence, patience, helpfulness, sympathy, piety, and trust in God, which are more easily obtained by those who have little of this world's goods than by those who have or covet much. These qualities are compatible with poverty, and in their most vigorous exercise would probably be prohibitive of great accumulations; and therefore, looking to the character of those who, in seeking the kingdom of heaven have renounced the pursuit of wealth, He says: Blessed are ye poor. And generalising the truth, He puts it: Blessed are the poor in spirit.

"Blessed are they that mourn" receives a similar explanation from a reference to the parallel in St. Luke. The mourning is that which comes in a particular

way, viz., by a resolute adhesion to the kingdom of God. The loyal suffer. To obey God rather than man involves losing the favour of man. Subjects of the kingdom smart under the scorn of the world; they are wounded in grapples with the evil of the world. Fishing for souls is the hardest of deep-sea fisheries, and the innumerable disappointments and failures will by themselves keep the fisherman mourning. The tribulation is inevitable. The strain of toil and the fret of care are part of the cross which is taken up in following Christ. And in addition, the tears of penitence over sin are a sorrowful river which runs by the road all the way to the heavenly city. It is this kind of mourning which is blessed.

Then "meek" requires a word of explanation. It sounds to our ears effeminate. But the Greek word describes that quality which is only found in the bravest and strongest of souls, in a Bayard or a Gordon. It is that strong control of temper which prevents irritation and irrational resentment. When self is mastered, an injury done to you affects you neither more nor less than if it was done to another. What you resent is not the personal element, but the detriment to truth and justice and love. Men who are sudden and quick in quarrel; men who take offence and fire up at fancied insults;

men who swagger and boast and threaten; men who in the house are hardly approachable, but make the lives of wife and children a burden—these are the men who often receive the admiration of the world; but they receive none from Jesus. Though they appear to grab the land, to extend their borders, to build empires, they will not inherit the earth. In a little while they will lie underneath it, their fiery spirit quenched by a handful of dust. Our Lord opens out to us a new realm of truth when He quietly observes that the strong soul, balanced, self-restrained, placable and gentle—this is what He intends by the term meek—really wins and possesses the earth.

The "hunger and thirst after righteousness" does not so much derive explanation from as shed light on the parallel in Luke. No doubt the sons of the kingdom who do their work fasting, from choice or necessity, get a blessing. But it can hardly be of that fasting that Jesus was thinking; for the promise, Ye shall be filled, would be too gross as applied to earthly food, especially when the contrast is between now and a future life (Luke vi. 21). Our text in St. Matthew therefore gives us the true interpretation. Jesus admires those who hunger and thirst after righteousness as men hunger and thirst after food and drink. They shall be filled.

"Merciful" receives an interpretation from the verse in St. Luke (vi. 36): "Be ye merciful even as your Father is merciful." The mercy of God is singularly different from the mercy of men. Human mercy frequently aggravates the sufferings it attempts to relieve. Human charity makes pauperism. Human pity will move heaven and earth to rescue a robber or a murderer from punishment, but will overlook the sorrow of the robbed, and forget to drop a tear on the murdered. Mercy, as men show it, is weak and partial; it is commonly the outcome of weakness and partiality. The mercy of God, on the other hand, is of such a kind that there is none of His attributes which men so seldom recognise or admire. It is stern. It does not rejoice against His judgment. The two are identical. *Unto Thee belongeth mercy, because Thou renderest to every man according to his works.* One who pities equally the criminal and his victim is not merciful as the Father is merciful. One who mistakes maudlin tears for compassion, who experiences his tenderest feelings in a theatre, who relieves a whining impostor in the street, but is unaffected by a whole population massacred out of sight, is not in Christ's sense merciful at all. Sentimentality is only selfishness. It is largely a pose for which one vastly admires oneself. The mercy of which Christ speaks

requires a careful analysis in the light of His own character.

The phrase "pure in heart" requires much meditation but no explanation. It never loses its meaning or its power.

"Peacemaker" too is a perfectly clear term, if we keep our eye on the promise that peacemakers shall be called the sons of God. The Son of God is the one peacemaker. He is our peace. By following up the ways in which He has made peace we get a vivid idea of what He means by a *peacemaker*. Nor is there any ambiguity about that trait of character which incurs reproach, persecution, and slander for the sake of righteousness and of Christ. In an ideal world, of course, this and some other of the traits would disappear. The ideal character is living in a world which has to be made ideal. His task is warfare against evil. He is therefore a Happy Warrior, not a just man made perfect. And it is well to remember that the Captain of our salvation regards with approval those who, armed in the panoply, are fighting as best they may the good fight of faith.

The character now may stand out with some distinctness. Wealth or poverty, reputation or obscurity, talents great or small, male or female, young or old, these are points of indifference. The character

shines through all the externals. We picture to ourselves one who regards all his earthly advantages as the gift or loan of God, and lives always in immediate dependence on God Himself, making no claims, humble, helpful, sympathetic to others, whom he regards as equally God's children. He has a large share of sorrows and trials, but he lives in hope, knowing that he will be comforted. His temper is under control; if he is angry it is only against evil and wrong; he harbours no resentments, but forgives his enemies. He gains his ends not by clamour and self-assertion, but by singleness of purpose, patience, and faith. His one dominant desire is to be good. Goodness is a point which creates a craving in him, a fountain for which he thirsts as in a dry land. This dominant desire for goodness subordinates all other desires, and destroys such as are inconsistent with it. His attitude to all the erring or suffering fellow creatures around him is one of reasoned compassion. He is always ministering to their needs, but never forgets that the supreme end is righteousness. He does not, like William Law, make the place in which he lives a nest of imposture and demoralisation by indiscriminate charity. His relief aims at the soul, and as physical ills have their root in spiritual his spirit strikes at the root. He is pure in heart, his purity of conduct

flows from that inner purity. His eye is single; his motives are simple. He does everything for the love of God and in the spirit of Christ. In that way he sees God all the time, and in His light sees light. His presence everywhere is the signal for peace. He does not so much compose quarrels, but as he comes with his calm and heavenly spirit into the quarrelsome atmosphere those who are at strife are shamed into peace. He is never irritating, his virtues are not irritating because they do not obtrude themselves. As self is crucified the great irritating element in human nature is gone. And yet he is persecuted and hated. He is hateful as Christ was hateful to the Scribes and Pharisees. He is denounced as a hypocrite; he is charged with secret vices; his virtues are said to be assumed for an end. Malice would gladly slay him or ostracise him. His self-restraint is derided as lack of spirit. His generosity is treated as a confession of ill-gotten gains. His efforts to help men are resented by those whom he helps, and uniformly depreciated by the rest of the world. He travels like a planet through the night of misrepresentation and dislike; but like a planet he is quite steadfast and luminous, and like a planet he draws all his light from the Sun.

Now, I do not know how we can adequately ap-

praise this character which stands as the frontispiece to the legislation of Jesus, the character which the legislation and Legislator design to produce, except by placing side by side the pre-Christian ideal of character. I will not take the Sage of the Stoic, because Stoicism only reached its full bloom after Christ had come, in Seneca, Epictetus, and Marcus Aurelius, when it is evident that at least the Christian atmosphere has crept into the Porch.

But in Aristotle we have the most vigorous thinker that our Aryan race produced before Christ came. He devoted a great part of his study and thought to Ethics, and his book on the subject is still the text-book in one of our great English Universities.* In the development of his ethical theories he devotes a chapter to the description of what he evidently regards as the ideal character, one who sums up in his person the virtues which the Aristotelian system might produce. It is well worth our while to contemplate this portrait.

The ideal man is the μεγαλόψυχος. No exact equivalent is found in English, but the word means Great-souled. Let us call him Great-soul. To begin with, he must be great in the common sense of the word; no ordinary person can be an ideal

* *Nicomachean Ethics*, see iv. 3, for the study which follows.

character. He has all the virtues, but that means only that he is placed by circumstances or character above temptation. He does not avoid vice because it is wrong but because he feels it to be unworthy of him. Great-soul claims great things for himself because he deserves them. Empty-soul claims them without deserving them. Little-soul deserves them but does not claim them. And in Aristotle's judgment Empty-soul is nearer to Great-soul than Little-soul is. Great-soul accepts honour as his due and is not grateful for it. When it comes from good people and on great occasions he will be moderately pleased, feeling that he meets with his due or less, for no honour could equal absolute virtue. But honour from ordinary people or on small occasions he will utterly despise. To power and wealth he will be indifferent. Great-soul has a just scorn for his inferiors. He is glad to do a benefit, but ashamed to receive one; he remembers those whom he has served but not those who have served him. He will not compete for the common objects of ambition; he will only attempt important matters, otherwise he will seem inactive. Open in friendship and hatred, truthful in speech, he will yet be reserved and ironical in manner to common people. He does not admire. He does not bear malice. He does not gossip. He neither praises nor blames. He

prefers beautiful and useless possessions to useful and serviceable ones. His gait is slow, his voice deep, and his diction stately.

The character of Great-soul which Aristotle thus portrays is, it is to be observed, centred in pride. Its virtues are the outcome of a sublime self-esteem. The motive for being virtuous is the praise of men, and therefore Great-soul will be no more virtuous than men admire. He reflects the standard of his time; nor could the standard materially advance along the lines of Aristotelian Ethics.

Such a character, dignified, self-confident, self-contained, attracts admiration still. But no one can hesitate in recognising the great gulf fixed between it and the ideal character of Jesus. The one is rooted in earth and self, the other is rooted in heaven and in God. The one is possible for a few exceptional men; it is at the best only aristocratic. The other is possible for all mankind. The one, resting on self-esteem, could produce no inward peace here, and suggests no future life; the other, resting on self-crucifixion, brings inward peace here, and carries with it a yearning for and a demonstration of a life to come.

These Beatitudes have not yet transformed the world, but they have transformed the ideal of the world. What we who repent and follow Christ

wish to be is something which it had not entered into the heart of the greatest before Christ even to conceive. And this new man in Christ each of us may become by the laws of the kingdom and by the Lawgiver who enjoins them.

CHAPTER V

THE SIMPLICITY OF THE LAW

Matt. xxii. 40; *Luke x.* 27

BEFORE examining the regulations of the new law as they are summarised in the Sermon on the Mount, there is a still briefer summary which our Lord adopted, or Himself formulated. We are left in some uncertainty, because in St. Matthew's narrative we are told that a certain lawyer asked Him a question, with a somewhat disingenuous purpose, Which is the great commandment in the Law?—a question of frequent discussion in the Rabbinical schools. Jesus replied that the great and first commandment was to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy mind, and a second like unto it was this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. "On these two commandments," He added, "hangeth the whole law, and the prophets." In St. Luke, the certain lawyer who stood up tempting Him put the question,

Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? Jesus replied by asking him how he read the law. The lawyer then summarised the law in the formula, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy strength and with all thy mind, and thy neighbour as thyself. Jesus said, Thou hast answered right: this do and thou shalt live. And then the lawyer's self-justification elicited the narrative of the Good Samaritan. It is quite possible, as Meyer supposes, that the lawyer in Luke is not the same as the one referred to in Matthew, and that the lawyer in Luke, knowing the formula which Jesus had already given as the summary of the law, asked his question to elicit an expected answer, intending to pose Him with the casuistical question, Who is my neighbour? In that case, he was disconcerted by the inquiry of Jesus, What is written in the law? How readest thou? and was obliged himself to give the summary which he expected from Jesus.

It is this duplicate narrative which leaves us in doubt whether it was Jesus who first selected the two texts (Deut. vi. 4, and Lev. xix. 18) and offered them as the most important feature of the law. But we need not be in any doubt as to His originality and divine authority in characterising this twofold commandment as the pivot on which the whole law

and the prophetic teaching turn. The Rabbis may have given to it a pre-eminence; Jesus found that it was the whole law in germ and principle. Perhaps, too, we may lay stress on the precise form of the question in Matthew. It should literally be, Master, what kind of a commandment is great in the law? And the subtlety of the temptation was that the lawyer wished to draw Him into a qualitative estimate of the commandments, which would have led to an endless casuistical discussion. If we are right in pressing this form of the question, the answer of Jesus comes out even more distinctly: You ask me what kind of a commandment holds pre-eminence among the precepts of the law. My answer is, that kind of commandment which turns upon Love. And as love must be directed towards God or man, love is a convenient term in which to sum up the quality and the purpose of Revelation. *Thou shalt love.* When you have given to that precept its full content, then you have obeyed all the requirements which the divisions and subdivisions of the Jewish code and the burning utterances of the prophets endeavoured to inculcate.

Whatever may be the degree of originality in this mode of handling the law, it is clear that Jesus by His precept and example struck out a totally new thought in ethics and religion by His application of

the truth inbedded in the ancient law. If the Rabbis recognised a pre-eminence in the mighty precept Thou shalt love, none the less they lost themselves and their hearers in an intricate maze of regulations which had little or nothing to do with love. But Jesus gave to the idea such a power and such an inclusiveness that He succeeded in absorbing all the precepts of His law in the one principle. His Apostles unquestioningly accepted this solution of all casuistry. "For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, thou shalt not kill, thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is summed up in this word, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Rom. xiii. 9). In St. James, the perfect law, the law of liberty, fulfils itself in service to sufferers and purity towards God (Jas. i. 25–27). St. Peter sums up all his teaching in exhortations to love (1 Pet. iii. 8, 9; 2 i. 7). And St. John is so possessed with the thought, that tradition presents him, in the renunciation of all other doctrine simply spreading his hands over the Church with the injunction: Little children, love one another.

It cannot be said that this summary of the law dispenses with the careful consideration of the details which are given in the Sermon on the Mount. But this is the bird's-eye view of the whole country

of the new law. We are taken up into an exceeding high place, where love reigns unquestioned and uncrossed. We are shown that this light of love shines all over the landscape; and if it should be withdrawn the landscape would disappear or lose its beauty. We are forewarned that love must be the clue to every interpretation of the law, so much so that whatsoever is not of love can never fulfil the law. We are impressed with the idea—it is the burning and the shining light of the Lord's own person—that in this everything is simplified, a direct standard is introduced, a motive for entering on action and a test for estimating action are offered —Love is the fulfilling of the law.

It is an interesting study to examine the truth of St. Paul's statement that all the commandments in the second table of the Mosaic Law are fulfilled by loving our neighbours as ourselves, and to realise how the commandments in the first table, though they are given to promote the fear of God, are never really fulfilled except from the love of God. That study, however, would lead us an unnecessary distance from our immediate object.

It will be a more relevant task to notice as we proceed how strictly all the new commandments of the kingdom are included in love to God and love to man. The conviction slowly grows upon us that

every requirement which is not immediately referable to the precept, Thou shalt love, may be safely eliminated from the Christian law. This is the hall-mark of all the genuine laws of the kingdom. If we find a law without the hall-mark we may safely disregard it. On the other hand, every commandment which receives this stamp immediately becomes obligatory. The Sermon on the Mount viewed microscopically presents a broad surface of precepts which cover life in this world and in the world to come; but viewed telescopically it resolves itself into the large and lucent planet of love, which shines in the heavens as Hesper-Phosphor, the star of evening and of morning. If only we could gain love in its divine fulness, we should "know all mysteries and all knowledge."

But the more immediate object of the present chapter is to emphasise the value of the simplification, and yet to recognise the difficulty of this apparently simplified law, and finally to trace the forces in the Gospel which generate love, and so fulfil the law, and produce the fruit on the vine.

1. *The value of the simplification.*—Some of the greatest names in science are those of men who have succeeded in simplifying knowledge by means of a broad generalisation. Kepler brought the apparently eccentric movements of the planets into

simplicity by discovering that the orbits were elliptical. Newton succeeded in stating a formula which accounts for the cohesion and stability of the material universe. Dalton founded modern chemistry by stating a theory of atoms and the fixity of proportions. In moral science the attempts at simplification have usually been premature, and therefore unsuccessful. To explain virtue as a calculus of pleasures, or to resolve it into utilitarianism; to explain religion as the fear of ghosts, or worship as an instinct to propitiate a dread Unknown—these are instances of simplification which have only an apparent value: they carry back moral and religious ideas to their historical antecedents, instead of explaining how they could have grown out of their antecedents. Such an explanation of morality and religion, instead of validating, depreciates the facts which have to be explained.

On the other hand, sages ancient and modern have uttered aphorisms which have had the illuminating effect of bringing scattered ideas into a unity. Such an aphorism was that of the early Greek thinker, Know thyself. Such an aphorism was Kant's principle, So act that the law of thy action might be law universal. But no simplification was ever at once so illuminating and so penetrating as this of Jesus, which brings all moral and religious ideas

together in one formula: Thou shalt love. The ancient world had established no settled connection between religion and morality; and when at last the Stoics established a connection, it was barren because love had no place in either of the terms. The religion of revelation had never questioned the connection, and, as these two precepts from the Jewish law indicate, the truth was revealed that love to God was religion, and love to man was morality. But these lively truths were encumbered by a deadweight of legalism and tradition; and in our Lord's time, if we may follow the narrative of St. Luke, the unification of the law in the precept, Thou shalt love, was merely a thesis for the hairsplitting of the schools. Jesus not only made the simplification, but He made it live. It is not in word that His originality consists, but in power. "Thou shalt love," He said, "that is the whole law." But, more important still, He made Love a practical possibility.

2. For it has to be admitted that though the law may be reduced to one commandment, this commandment in itself is difficult, and in any adequate sense of the phrase, apparently impossible.

It is a common impression that, whatever may be our faults, we can all at any rate love. But it is only because our ideal of love is low that we can ever think it to any great extent realised.

We begin to discover where we are by the fact that the love of God is placed before the love of men, and that love of God is to be "with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our strength, and with all our mind." Now most persons, so far from loving God, do not even conceive of Him as lovable. I lay no stress on pagan conceptions, nor even on the paganism which survives in Christianity, such paganism as is depicted by Mrs. Barr in her *Prisoners of Conscience*, where an unhappy Highland woman made shipwreck of her life because she was firmly convinced that God could create a soul for damnation, and had probably created her for that purpose. But even among enlightened Christians the love of God is seldom a feeling which would justify the strong language of the text. There may be an emotional or sentimental love, which is entirely devoid of mental elements; or there may be what was called in Spinoza an intellectual love of God which seems singularly cool on the emotional side. There may be a love, faint and hesitating, which it would be absurd to compare with the love which the same person entertains for wife or child. Or there may be a love which is with all one's strength, but, being misdirected and devoid of spiritual illumination, runs into fanaticism or bigotry. But how far are these from the love "with all the

heart, with all the soul, with all the strength, and with all the mind!"

It is impossible, therefore, to regard love to God as general or even common. It appears imperfect at the best. For the most part it scarcely seems to operate at all. It is high, men cannot attain to it. If it is a condition of virtuous action that it should be done purely "for the love of God," virtuous action is even rarer than it appears. In order to love God one must know Him and perceive Him to be lovable; one must come into a personal relation with Him, which can be only in the spirit, and never through the senses; one must practise His presence and obedience to Him, and while studying with all the mind His attributes, one must with all one's heart surrender to His will.

On the whole this simplification, Thou shalt love God, if it is to be taken with any seriousness, is in danger of becoming no simplification at all, but rather a commandment which the angels in heaven can hardly attain unto, and how much less sinful men! It is terrible to be judged for our positive sins, but where shall we appear if the demand is that we should have a whole and perfect love to God?

But can we find any relief by turning to the other member of the commandment, Thou shalt love thy

neighbour as thyself; and can we grasp at the apostolic thought that in loving our brother whom we have seen we may in a sense exhibit love to God whom we have not seen? There is little comfort to be derived in this direction. For though the more unselfish of us can very truly say that there are persons whom we love as ourselves—we might even suppose more—yet we cannot say that we have that degree of love to our neighbour, if we are to give to the term neighbour the application which Jesus Himself gives in the story of the Good Samaritan. Our neighbour does not signify even those who live near to us, and appear to have some relation with us; it equally covers those who are strangers, and to whom we have a long hereditary prejudice. To the Catholic a Protestant is *neighbour*. To the Churchman a Nonconformist is *neighbour*. It appears to be of the very essence of Catholicism that one could not love a Protestant as oneself. And how can a Churchman who believes that his Church is *the* Church love as himself one who obstinately declines to belong to it? Perhaps our Lord chose the instance of Jew and Samaritan, knowing that human nature is never so unloving as when it is on fire with religious orthodoxy. And by this selection in the very domain of religion He brings out the extraordinary difficulty we all find in loving

any one *as ourselves*, except the very few, relations or friends, with whom we feel a very unusual affinity.

Strictly speaking, men are more able to love God than one another, and on the whole they do love God more than they love one another.

So far, then, from finding relief by turning to this second member of the implied commandment, we are led to a more anxious search of the conscience. We are inclined to say: "Those precepts of the stone tables are easy in comparison with this. By watching and self-discipline I may keep from adultery, and theft, and killing, and false witness and coveting; but if I am required to love these persons—the man who has won the woman that I love, the man who occupies the position that I deserve, the brute whose sneaking and treacherous character twitches my murderous hand, the liar who has provoked me by bearing false witness against me—I am fairly staggered!"

Yet love is hardly love that follows only the lines of choice and self-pleasing. While desire strolls down the path of dalliance in the garb of love, it is impossible to know him. But there is a point where the way diverges and strikes through the thickets: there the stones cut the dainty shoes, and the briers tear the primrose garments: when robe and shoes

are gone, then, and not till then, you will find whether this is love or only desire.

3. And yet we started with the thought that this command, Thou shalt love, was a genuine simplification of the law. And with this thought we may close. For it is the great distinction of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ that it contains forces which generate love. It is its power to generate love that enables it to fulfil the law, and to bear the fruit upon the vine. Here, as everywhere before and after, the mere commandments of Jesus cast us powerfully upon His person. The wonder, we find, lies after all not in the commandment, in the simplification, Thou shalt love, but in Him who gives the commandment, and in His extraordinary ability to "stir up and awaken love."

Love is the sleeping beauty which lies under an age-long spell dormant in the heart of man. It is Jesus who has kissed the lips and awakened love.

The latent forces in the Gospel for awakening love to God and to men appear to be inexhaustible. One will arise and work and seem to expend itself. But as it subsides another shoots out for a new generation, and then another and another. Then an influence which had apparently died down awakes with new and irresistible attraction. We must be content here with a bare enumeration of these tongues

of fire which have shot out from the burning sun of the Gospel in the experience of the Church. The mere delineation of God as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, appeals to the understanding and the heart as a motive of love, because the Gospel presents the Godhead as engaged in the task of saving man. "I love the Father," said the little boy on his death-bed to McCheyne, "who loved me and gave Jesus to die for me; I love Jesus who shed His precious blood for me; and I love the Holy Ghost who made me know the love of the Father and the love of the Son."

The golden text of St. John, *God is love*, puts into three words the sum of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. There is no metaphysical exposition of God; it is not thought necessary to adduce theistic arguments; but the being of God unfolds itself as essential love—as a process of love between Father and Son—and as love in operation towards the world, both in creation when the Spirit brooded on chaos, and in redemption when the same Spirit came to regenerate human hearts. In the gospel the Creator appears for the first time as an object of love; we love Him because He first loved us. God in paganism is an object of fear; God in the highest efforts of Greek genius becomes an object of æsthetic complacency; but God in the face of Christ Jesus, God

with the words on His lips, *I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee,* awakes in the human heart the response of love. It may be true that the God of Christian theology has often been deficient in these "bands of love"; but that is only because Christian theology has diverged from the lines traced in the gospel; every return to the gospel in its simplicity is the discovery of the infinite Being as a heart of love that attracts and retains the love of men.

Then, again, the person and character of Jesus elicit an enthusiasm and a passion of love in the heart that recognises them. *Jesus having loved His own, loved them to the end.* He presents a unique instance of a steady and dominant love towards men who seem not to deserve it. And while on the one hand Jesus is so identified with God that love to Him becomes at once love to the Father, He is on the other hand so identified with men that love to Him passes insensibly into love to them. As the love of Christ awakes in a man's heart, he exhibits it instinctively towards the hungry and the naked, the sick and imprisoned, so that works of charity spring like flowers in the path which Jesus treads and His disciples follow.

But it is the Cross and the sacrifice of Jesus

which make the sharpest impact on the loveless hearts of men. It is possible, no doubt, to receive without emotion the dogmatic statement, *Christ died for the ungodly, the just for the unjust, to bring them to God.* But it does not seem possible to follow the narrative of the Crucifixion given in the Gospels, and to seriously realise its significance, without being moved with an impulse of love towards Him, and towards God, and towards man. The character and life which precede the narrative, the malice and injustice of the prosecution, the unfailing dignity and serenity of the Victim, His unselfishness in the pangs of death, and the sense which the whole story conveys of vicarious sacrifice for the good of others, touch and break the heart. The plain presentation of it by the peasants of Ober-Ammergau has an overwhelming effect even on careless spectators. The actors add nothing to the Gospel narrative; they simply give it bodily expression, colour, and movement. One might challenge any human being to sit down in a calm moment to read and to realise the death of Jesus without being conscious of the wide arms that reach out to him from the Cross, without some answering love to the love that hung and suffered there.

And yet these are all merely outward and formal

forces which are at work in the Gospel for the awakening of love in men. The inward and efficient forces, which apply the outward and formal forces, are still more varied and effective. St. Paul, in describing the objective atonement and the appropriation of it by faith, says : *The love of God hath been shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Ghost which was given unto us* (Rom. v. 5). The Gospel culminates in the gift of the Holy Ghost. In the consideration and reception of the facts, a power is at work in the soul, which breaks and melts and re-shapes and reanimates. The first-fruit of the Spirit is love, and the Christian virtues result from it. And this mystical and miraculous birth of love is in harmony with our experience in human affairs. Love is not produced by a series of arguments ; the most that is produced in that way is esteem or respect. Love is produced by an unseen and unexplained afflatus. The kindling of love between a man and a maid is not the result of long years, and mutual study and comprehension. The two meet, and an electric spark passes at contact from one to the other. The love of parent and child has nothing to do with reason : before that masterly passion reason bows itself and becomes a servant. And in all good and pure and lasting love there is an

element which transcends the understanding even of the wisest.

And when we say that the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ contains forces which stir love in the human heart, and by stirring love put the code of the higher morality in operation, because love is the fulfilling of the law, we not only mean that the gospel contains a portraiture of God in the person of Christ which is calculated to attract the love of men, or that the story of the suffering Saviour is rich in natural appeals to the human heart, but we mean principally that in the gospel the Holy Spirit is at work, a direct, inward, supernatural power, which moves upon the human heart, and the love of God is shed abroad in it. "I cannot understand; I love." The foundations of our being are searched, and the fountains of the great deep are broken up. Reason co-operates and approves, but it is not the work of reason. Truth is revealed and accepted, but it is not the work of truth. It is God in the soul. God who is love has entered into the springs of the heart, and set them moving to the music of love. Love to God and love to men are one and the same thing: all love is the creation of God. In the light of this pervading love the several commandments of the law are interpreted. They all flow out of it; they all are fulfilled by it. *Thou shalt love* is

everything. And here is God Himself effecting the all-inclusive miracle—thou lovest.

Awake, O north wind; and come, thou south,
Blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out.
Let my beloved come into his garden,
And eat his precious fruits.

CHAPTER VI

THE CODIFIED LAW: THE FIVE PRECEPTS

WE have studied the two initial commandments of Jesus; we have traced the lines of His ideal character; we have tracked all commandments up to the great unifying commandment, Thou shalt love. We are now in a position to examine the specific code which He drew up to occupy in the Christian Church the place which the Ten Commandments occupy in Judaism. The code is given, one might almost say, in a codified form by St. Matthew; in the third Gospel it is given piecemeal on various occasions. Side by side, therefore, with the Sermon on the Mount, we have to study the following passages from St. Luke, and in the following order: vi. 20–26; xiv. 34, 35; viii. 16; xi. 33; xvi. 17; xii. 58, 59; xvi. 18; vi. 27–36; xi. 1–4; xi. 34–36; xvi. 13; xii. 22–34; vi. 37–42; xi. 9–13; xiii. 24–27; vi. 43–49. These nuggets of the code spread over the whole of our Lord's ministry afford some

suggestions on the application of its principles; but they do not in their scattered condition produce the effect which is produced by their codification in Matt. v.-vii. And it is impossible to resist the impression that the Spirit of God determined the arrangement, by which the ministry and gospel of Jesus open with a full and detailed enunciation of His law.

The first main block of the legislation of Jesus consists of five definite commandments, which are perhaps given as illustrations of the way in which Jesus would deal with the Mosaic code. He does not abolish, He fulfils; that is to say, He cuts down to the root of ethics, and He gives to old laws a deeper meaning. "It was said to them of old time" implies that the law of Moses was a revelation in the past. "But I say unto you" announces a rectification of the law which is given in His person.

The perfectly natural way in which Jesus assumes the right to handle the ancient law is full of meaning. If He had ignored or cancelled the old revelation, setting His authority against it, every one who believed that God spoke to Moses would have had reason to discredit Jesus. If He had reasserted the law of Moses as the final law, His humanity would have been vindicated at the expense of His divinity. But the full recognition that the old law

was right and could never pass away, combined with the absolute authority to develop and deepen it for the new era of the kingdom of God which was at hand, is a subtle indication that in the utterance of Jesus God was speaking. No explicit claim to divinity could have so lasting an effect as this perfectly natural assumption of it. No other ever spoke like this. That "I say unto you" shuts us up to the conclusion that He was either God or one beside himself.

These five re-readings of the Mosaic regulations have a peculiar interest just now, because a Russian man of genius, Count Leo Tolstoi, has exalted them to a position of exclusive authority. He sees in them the complete account of the new legislation of Jesus. This great writer gives an independent testimony to the teaching of Jesus, because he found it for himself, and read it with the fresh unquestioning eyes of a child—a child of genius—when the tradition of religion and the authority of the Church had failed to satisfy him. Thus he finds the divinity of Jesus evidenced in His teaching. He considers Christianity "the only doctrine which gives a meaning to life." It is "not only not a superstition, but it is on the contrary the most convincing presentment of metaphysics and morals, the purest and most complete doctrine of life, and the

highest light which the human mind has ever reached, a doctrine from which all the noblest activities of humanity in politics, science, poetry and philosophy instinctively derive themselves."* To Tolstoi these five commandments suffice. Perhaps he gets wrong in isolating them from the rest of the teaching. Certainly he misses the only method by which they can be realised in failing to grasp the living Christ as the power present to fulfil His own law. But a fair study of even this brief section of the law of Jesus is enough to justify all that the great Russian says. Let these five commandments be kept, let the way of keeping them be found, and in a very full sense the kingdom of God has come. For observe, the underlying principle in this re-reading of the law is that the law should be kept from within outwards, and not from without inwards. This is that "inwardness of Jesus" of which Matthew Arnold used to write. Conduct proceeds from the condition of the heart. Properly enough, men can only judge one another by the outward signs; but the true judgment, the judgment of God, goes to the inner parts. Jesus Himself, who knows what is in men, estimates everything by what goes on unseen and unheard, the antecedents of good or evil action, which have a quality of their

* See the preface to *The Gospel in Brief*, p. 19.

own even supposing that they never issue into action at all.

Jesus Himself is able to penetrate and to affect this inner man. His mystical indwelling by the spirit is a power which operates on the springs of action. *Who hath put wisdom in the inward parts?* * *I will put my law in their inward parts, and in their heart will I write it.*† These ancient questions and promises are fulfilled in Him. It is in this sense that He gives men His flesh and His blood to eat and to drink. He comes to be the inner sustenance of the new life, the life of the spirit. "I say unto you" passes into "I will do it."

Now, it may be said that this method of tracking moral action up to its sources in thought, and passing judgment on the mere notions and desires which flit through the mind, makes the law more exacting and the possibility of fulfilling it more remote. This is in a sense true. The new law makes greater demands than the old; but it is not harder, and the new power of fulfilment even justifies the remark that the "yoke is easy and the burden light." It is not really harder, because evil conduct is more easily resisted at its source in thought than when it has gathered volume enough to issue in action. The principle *obsta principiis* applies here. For example,

* Job. xxxviii. 36. † Jeremiah xxxi. 33.

sins of lust and revenge sweep one away like a flood, if they have been cherished and fed in thought; the tide rises within; when it is high enough to burst the barriers it is already irresistible. But if the struggle against them is begun in the secret chambers of imagery, if there the first movements of passion are watched and suppressed, there will be no danger of sinful action. And that repression of thought which threatens to issue in sin is by no means impossible. It lies very fully within the power of the will. But the direct power of Jesus, and the preoccupation with His person, His teaching, and His will, gives to this inward struggle for cleansing of the thoughts a great joy; the yoke is sweet to bear, and makes the toil of life a delight.

The five commandments briefly stated—and it should be observed that Jesus is careful to avoid any statements of His own which might reduce them to formulæ, instead of demanding a thoughtful examination—are these: (1) Thou shalt not be angry with any one. (2) Thou shalt avoid lust. (3) Thou shalt not use oaths. (4) Thou shalt not resist evil. (5) Thou shalt love enemies as well as friends.

These commandments are high. At first sight we fancy that we cannot attain unto them. Even Christian men seldom make any serious attempt to keep them, notwithstanding that it is the failure to

keep them which makes men like the one who built his house upon the sand. They can all be kept if we understand their meaning, and if we are willing to lay hold of the strength of Jesus as a practical guiding power in life. They express the common sense of the kingdom of God. No reasonable being doubts that the breach of these commandments is the main cause of human sorrow, or that the keeping of them would transform the present world into a Paradise. Further, it is a fact that many do, to a large extent, keep these commandments, with the most beneficent results; they are persons who have meditated upon them day and night, and have, through repentance and the following of Christ, had some experience of His supernatural influence.

1. The first of the five commandments forbids quarrelling. The Mosaic Law was content with prohibiting the ultimate issue of the quarrel, murder. It left men with the notion that if their angry thoughts and contemptuous expressions stopped short of injurious action, they were guiltless. It stands over the Communion-tables in church, where probably no one would contemplate murder, but where many have the rancour, the hatred, the envy, the scorn which, if the civil law were less powerful, would result in murder. If for the Mosaic Law were substituted Christ's amendment, the hearts of men would

be properly searched. It is probable that we are not to distinguish gradations of punishment in the terms "judgment," "council," "hell of fire," as if the council were more severe than the judgment and hell fire worse than either. It is not worse to call a man Raca than to be angry with him, or to say fool than to call him Raca. Judgment, council, and hell fire all mean the same thing, and the movement is rather from the graver sin to what is considered the lighter, with the assurance that the one punishment awaits them all. "You suppose," He says, "that murder exposes you to the divine judgment, but I say unto you that so does anger with your brother, or a word of abuse, or even a word of scorn."

The presence in thought of such a quarrelsome tendency will prevent the act of worship, so that it is necessary, before bringing a gift to God, to be reconciled with all men. An uncomposed quarrel is a danger to a man, in view of the divine judgment; he should therefore use immediate efforts to effect an agreement, lest the time should pass, and he should find himself handed over to punishment, with the dread prospect of not escaping from that spiritual prison-house until the utmost should be paid.

Our murderous deeds have their roots in thought, and they are usually forced by violent language; if the tongue were restrained, and if the thought of

wrath were suppressed, there would be no fear of the deed of violence. I remember seeing a woman who attained a great age; she died in her 104th year. To speak to her seemed like summoning her up from long-silent galleries of the past. With some effort she was induced to realise our presence and to enter into conversation. She remembered the news of Waterloo coming to her village. But when she was asked what in her long experience had caused the most trouble in life, she rapidly answered, "Temper." And she proceeded to descant on the miseries which she had seen in homes and families from that one cause. This is the verdict of human experience. It is not therefore without reason that Jesus puts this prohibition in the forefront of His commandments.

If anger is silenced, and if the lips refrain from words of provocation, the wars and tumults of the world die away; personal feuds are allowed to burn out; the tinder which feeds the great conflagrations is withdrawn. Party strife is changed into the calm consideration of the best method to be followed in disputed questions. Where anger is suppressed, men's natural respect for one another asserts itself. The strong subtle bond which binds humanity together is enough for social purposes until it is singed by the flames of wrath, and snapped by our

vindictive passion. If, therefore, this commandment were obeyed, quarrels would become as rare as duels, and war would be a memory of the bitter past. Mutual reverence and cordial co-operation would spring up where no man thought ill of his brother or uttered the words of scorn. The glowing pictures of the golden age would be realised. Peace and goodwill would reign on the earth; and the earth would be like heaven. And towards this desired time the world makes a definite step whenever any of us, in obedience to the command of Jesus, quells the rising tide of wrath by His power, checks the angry word, refuses to think ill of another, or sows in the soil of the heart, where the thistles and the darnel grow, the seeds of charity and forgiveness. It is the beginning and the end of ethical progress to be free from wrath.

2. The prohibition of lust is even more subtle and far-reaching than the prohibition of anger. The miseries which come from perverted sexual relationships are greater than we realise, because we, happily, cannot examine them all. Only now and again a case in the courts, or an experience in private life, gives us a glimpse into the jealousy and fury, the burning passion, the sick revolt, the withering remorse, the hatred and resentment, the ruin and the shame, the spiritual death, which are

covered by the word Adultery. Tolstoi in his great novel, before he turned to Christ's commandments, depicted with an awful realism the issue of adultery as it is seen in Russian society. The beautiful and charming Anna Karénina passes by that deceptive road through feverish fancied joys to that self-loathing which finds relief in suicide.

Jesus is very emphatic on the inviolability of the marriage tie. (*Cf.* Mark x. 2, and Luke xvi. 18.) Evidently He would have no tampering with that law at which every high civilisation instinctively arrives—the law that a man and a woman should enter into a lifelong bond which must be on both sides kept unweakened. The purity of the family and the strength of the State, no less than the abstract principles of morality and religion, make this demand. He therefore strengthens the law of Moses in its tendency towards indissolubility of marriage, and will not allow that Moses had divine authority for granting a divorce on any other ground than that of unfaithfulness.

But the commandment here only touches upon marriage and its breach incidentally. The object is to point out, from the case of that wide-spreading misery of adultery, that the mischief begins not in the outward act, which on one occasion at least He viewed with unexpected leniency (John vii. 1–11), but

in the thoughts of the heart. There the dangerous fires are kindled which issue in such palpable disaster. There the imagination toys with sin, until it acquires an irresistible power. There the will sanctions an indulgence which, if carried into act, conscience would unhesitatingly condemn. And therefore Jesus strikes at the real source of the mischief. Conscience must be quickened to protest against the glances and the thoughts that feed desire. It is the roving eye, it is the lascivious thought, it is the admission of certain ideas into the mind which is the real beginning of the sin. He does not of course say or mean, that to entertain the adulterous thought is quantitatively as great as adultery, but qualitatively it is already sin when it kindles into desire, quite apart from the act in which it is consummated.

In the relentless struggle against evil thoughts of this kind Jesus warns us that stern demands may be made upon us; there is a sacrifice equivalent to plucking out the right eye or cutting off the right hand. But the result is worth the sacrifice. For if resistance is not effectual there at the beginning, it becomes more difficult after, and ultimately quite impossible. Lust when it has conceived brings forth death.* In vivid language He describes the

* See James iv. 1–10.

condition of the soul in which lust, unbridled, has obtained the mastery. It is accurately called Gehenna, or Hell. A worm gnaws, a fire burns; and it is probable that when the body is dead, the lustful spirit, forbidden to indulge in the acts which bring temporary but cruel relief, becomes a tormenting haunt of desires, a futile ghost, straining with unspent agony after the unattainable indulgence.

In proportion as He understood this hideous result of unchecked desire, He might well lay upon us the injunction to watch and guard against the seductive beginnings. And as His indwelling is of infinite value for all moral and spiritual victory, so it is never more obviously the one and only way than in the matter of inward purity. He alone is entirely without sin in the matter. Purity in Him is a strong, invigorating principle. His cool hand is laid upon the fevered brow; His perfect love casts out the imperfect loves which get immeshed in lust.

3. The third of the laws appears at first to be only a prohibition of swearing. The old commandment said: Thou shalt not swear falsely. The new commandment says: Thou shalt not swear at all. Oaths are not admissible, because intrinsically every oath is an invocation of God. Assume that the common formula is, By Heaven, or By the earth, or By Jerusalem; such an appeal is meaningless unless the

reference is to that God who makes the heaven His throne, the earth His footstool, and Jerusalem His city. Or assume that a man swears, By my head, or By my soul; the only element of confirmation is found in Him who has the control of the head and of the soul; one's own head is not in one's own power as a separate existence from one's self; an appeal to it is implicitly an appeal to God. The same objection would lie against the common oaths in our own day, By gad, By Jove, &c. They all mean God or nothing. The whole idea of such an expression is a solemn appeal to the one God to confirm or to refute what is said. "Men swear by the greater: and in every dispute of theirs the oath is final for confirmation."*

But the truth which Jesus teaches is that such an appeal to God is unnecessary, and intrinsically blasphemous, because in any case He hears, and will without appeal mark and visit the language used. An oath is after all a vain thing for assurance. One who will not tell the truth from the sense that God hears and knows, who does not realise that the witnessing heaven and earth are but the symbols of the listening God, will not tell the truth any the better for adjuring heaven or earth or God Himself, which are practically empty names to him. The distinction therefore between a plain statement

* Heb. vi. 16.

and one supported by an oath is false. To introduce such a distinction is immoral. It implies that one may be a liar without blame, but one may not break an oath without blame. As a matter of fact every lie means precisely the same judgment at the bar of God as a violated oath. It became therefore a cardinal point of the Christian ethics that swearing of all kinds should be discountenanced. *Above all things*, said St. James, *swear not, neither by the heaven, nor by the earth, nor by any other oath: but let your yea be yea, and your nay, nay; that ye fall not under judgment.**

Intrinsically the oaths demanded in law courts, and in other conditions of modern life, are pagan, or at least unchristian. The protest of the Society of Friends against the practice, in the name of our Lord's commandment, has had more effect in making us as a nation truthful, than the oaths have had in securing correct witness in the courts. In the legitimate sense of the oath, every statement we make is upon oath, that is to say, it is uttered in the presence of God, and we shall give account of it to Him. The oath in the common sense of the term is illegitimate, because it tends to weaken that conviction of His presence which should prevail in every Christian mind.

* James v. 12.

But while the commandment is directed against swearing, it is evident that our Lord's words, as so often, go much further than their immediate application. Once realise that all our language is an appeal to God, that it is all, as it were, recorded by the invisible pen, and there is at once a reason for a general exactness and consideration of our speech. *Let your speech be, Yea, yea, Nay, nay: and whatsoever is more than these is of the evil one.* That is a principle which carries us far. We are not to wrap ourselves up in the obscurity of wordiness. It is part of the moral, not to say the spiritual, life to fit language accurately to thought, and to avoid the verbiage in which the mind easily trips.

> Prune thou thy words, the thoughts control
> That o'er thee swell and throng!
> They will condense within thy soul
> And form to purpose strong.
>
> For he who lets his feelings run
> In soft luxurious flow,
> Shrinks when hard service must be done,
> And faints at every woe.

It is remarkable that this principle of our Lord's touches the secret of good style in literature. It is luxuriance of language which makes bad composition; and there is no surer sign of mental and moral decay than when public taste encourages euphuistic

or flamboyant writing. And the truth about style is truth about life. The better a man is, the more simple and direct and sincere his speech becomes. His words are clear-cut, coming off as the inevitable expression of his thoughts, or his feelings, or his purposes. When a man has accustomed himself to deal only with truth, and to speak only as in the hearing of God, he becomes in his communications with men incapable of verbal extravagance. His words are few, though he may say much and have much to say. His speech is seasoned with salt.*

Therefore consider that behind the arras the pen is recording all that is said. And God is in heaven, thou upon earth; let thy words be few. The loose flow of words, the violent asseverations, the false emphasis, the endless repetitions, are hateful to Him and destructive to yourself.

4. The fourth of the laws, *Resist not evil*, has attracted much attention owing to the application which Tolstoi has given to it. He has used it as an argument against war and personal reprisals, and also against government and the administration of justice. But it is a serious matter to break one of the least of Christ's commandments and to teach men so. It is only too easy to press one of His pregnant sayings into the service of our foregone

* Col. iv. 6.

conclusions. Unfortunately Tolstoi's interpretation is apt to be quite arbitrary, following no principle of exegesis except the will of the exegete.

To begin with, this commandment is purely a guide to personal morality; and its application is determined by the commandment of the old law, which it supersedes. The Mosaic code recognised what is called the *lex talionis*, or the principle of retaliation. Every man had the right to recover from the aggressor the equivalent of the damage done. As a principle of civil law the doctrine is unimpeachable. The function of the State is to establish justice between its citizens, and, if one injures another, to secure for the injured an adequate compensation. But as a principle of personal vindication, unregulated by the strong and impartial hand of the law, it is open to abuse, and is in the long run severe on the weak and injurious to the strong.

If a man is to be the judge of the injury which he has received, and to exact what he considers compensation, justice will be impossible, and the only right will be might.

But further, Jesus does not seek to redress the evil by pointing to the establishment of impartial tribunals and a society founded on civil justice. Such a line of argument would be inconceivable in

the mind of one who sees everything *sub specie eternitatis*. He strikes out, on the contrary, a new and unheard-of line of personal ethics. He sees a way by which acts of aggression will cease, and the spirit of injustice will be cast out more rapidly than by the growth of civic jurisprudence.

> Shall crime bring crime for ever,
> Strength aiding still the strong ?

No, the citizen of the kingdom of heaven shall learn to overcome evil with good. In place of retaliation, which must always lead to fresh retaliation from the other side, until men consume one another in intestine feuds like the old Scottish clans,* Jesus suggests His own calm and patient endurance as the means of terminating strife.

To turn the other cheek, to give the cloke as well as the coat, to go two miles when compelled to go one, to give to one who asks, and not to turn from one who would borrow, are concrete expressions of the general principle. They cannot be regarded as directions for conduct without reservation.†

* John Williams in the South Seas visited an island which had a population of some hundreds. On a subsequent visit he found only five miserable survivors; the rest had exterminated one another in the pitiless retaliation of their tribal wars.

† " He Himself before the High Priest does not submit to wrong without asking in remonstrance, ' Why smitest

They simply indicate the lines along which the great principle will work out. *Resist not evil* means, then, to drop the spirit of resentment entirely, to crucify the tendency to retaliation; so that instead of vindicating oneself, one will be ready to endure to the utmost, spending and being spent, suffering and continuing to suffer. And the experience of life justifies the divine wisdom of this commandment. For wherever men have had the courage—and it demands much courage—to act simply along these lines, enmity has been disarmed, and the aggressor has been shamed into pity. If evil provokes resistance, resistance aggravates evil. But the soft answer turns away wrath; the spirit of enduring love, which forbids anger, appeals even to the worst human hearts. The open hand, which is ready to give and to lend, is more spared from exactions than the niggardly hand, because, by a beautiful principle of human nature, when selfishness and self-assertion die, mankind begin to protect the interests of the one who does not protect his own. It requires faith indeed to believe and to act on the

thou me?' And the most literal-minded of our Lord's hearers would not have felt bound to offer his cloke to one who had stolen his coat. The language shows by its very strength that it is figurative."—Latham's *Pastor Pastorum*, p. 211.

principle of this commandment. But faith, when it is exercised, is justified. And in the long run it is they who resist not evil, and only they, who have no evil to resist.

5. The fourth leads up to the fifth of these commandments and brings us to a consummation, which is nothing less than the perfection of God.

Here we get right down into the secret of Jesus. The old law said, not in so many words, but by implication : *Thou shalt love thy neighbour and hate thy enemy.* So old and so ineradicable is the law that it still in effect prevails. The average man is equally sure that he ought to love his friend, and that he is bound to hate his foe. It is here that the formula, *But I say unto you*, becomes sublime. Quietly pitting His authority against the tradition, convictions, and practices of the whole human race, Jesus says: *Love your enemies and pray for them that persecute you.*

Strange to say, He does not attempt to show that it is either possible or desirable. He is evidently striking a higher note than that of ethics or natural religion. The way to God lies open, steep and shining. He bids us climb it. The reason for the requirement is that God loves all mankind, the evil and the good, the just and the unjust. We are called up to that divine impartiality of love, in which

the distinctions of neighbour and enemy, of brother and stranger, disappear.

In the kingdom of God one is not at liberty to distinguish between friends and foes. Barbarian and Greek; Samaritan and Jew; Englishman and foreigner—these are misleading badges. If we are to "become the sons of the Father in heaven," we must extend the thought of His fatherhood and of our brotherhood to all mankind. The commandment is couched not in the general language which we should use, fatherhood of God and brotherhood of men, but in the language of the concrete; it touches the point where the practical difficulty is felt. None of us have any difficulty in adopting the fine sentiment of human brotherhood until we are personally affronted. What touches me, and renders my fine language absurd, is that *that* particular man has offended me; he has insulted me, he has robbed and injured me, he hates me. There is the crux. What becomes of the theory, All men are brothers, while this hot passion burns in my heart and I feel that I would gladly see my enemy dead at my feet? "We are all brothers," said Douglas Jerrold. "Yes, Cains and Abels."

Let us cease to talk of fatherhood and brotherhood while we hate our fellow man, or refuse to pray for him.

We can keep no commandment of Jesus rightly unless we keep this; for the idea runs through all His teaching. To forgive and to love, to have no rancour or resentment, to be practically beneficent to those who have ill used us, these are the tests of our religious faith. We cannot be Christians if we do not love our enemies; we should not be men if we had not enemies to love.

But still the question haunts us, Is it possible? And frankly we must admit that it is only possible if a new power, not ourselves, can enter into the soul. The Christian ethic without Christ is useless. It is only by the transforming effect of Christ received into the inner life that any progress can be made. To love my enemy implies that I become something other than myself. My enemy means the man I hate. When I love him I have become a new creature, which entirely changes my relation to him.

It is the same at every point in the commandments of Jesus. *Da quod jubes; jube quod vis*, is the inevitable prayer. Abide in me, so shall ye bring forth fruit, is the indispensable condition.

But now we must gather up the results of these five commandments. In a degree we are treading over again the path of the Beatitudes. In a still greater degree we are simply working out the great

commandment, Thou shalt love. In the greatest degree of all we are giving a definite meaning to the command, Follow me. But we have gained some new and some distinct ideas. We understand that we may not harbour in our thoughts the slightest enmity, resentment, or scorn. Love must reign in the heart towards offenders and foes, as well as towards the congenial and the friendly. We understand that purity must be a purity of intention and desire, as well as a purity of act. The flowing fountain of human defilement is staunched at the source. We understand that words have to be considered, because even for the lightest of them, the inaudible mutterings, the emptiest trivialities, we have to give an account. We understand that we have to stand before all personal ills, assaults, abuses, demands, in an attitude of self-surrender and non-resistance. We understand that we have to love our enemies and pray for our persecutors, because our aim is to be like our Father in heaven, and to become His sons.

Nothing could be more searching, nothing more simple, than these commands. They contain or imply everything. God, the perfect God, is assumed. Christ, the way to God, is presupposed. The Spirit that brings the things of Christ into the life of the believer is necessary. And then we are told how

we are to behave to our fellow men. When the result is considered and realised, we perceive at once that these are the laws of the kingdom of heaven. For if these laws are kept, heaven is begun upon earth. The heart where these laws run is heavenly. The men whose society is regulated by these laws are living the ideal and the perfect life.

Lord, have mercy upon us, and incline our hearts to keep Thy laws!

CHAPTER VII

THE SECRECY OF RELIGIOUS LIFE

THE paragraph, Matt. vi. 1–18, contains one commandment with three illustrations. If we notice that the word "righteousness" is the equivalent of our word "religion," the commandment runs: *Take heed that ye do not your religion before men to be seen of them.*

Jesus cuts down, as usual, to the very root of the matter. Religion is in the first instance, historically speaking, purely a question of outward observances. Except as it could be seen of men, it had no existence. Certain prescribed ceremonies, sacrifices, or ablutions, prostrations and recitations of prayers, constituted religion among the ancients. Judaism represents an advance on the ethnic religions, because, while it still attached religious importance to the ceremonial, it recognised that the value of ceremonial lay in its being an expression of inward thoughts or acts.

Jesus disregarded ceremonial altogether, and concentrated attention on the inward attitude. What passed within was of moment. What the soul was, and what it did when it was alone with God, none other seeing or hearing, that counted, that was religion. The idea has become familiar to us, and we do not recognise its originality—one might say its revolutionary originality. *The Father which seeth in secret;* that strikes the note of a new conception of religion, a religion which does not depend on buildings or sacred places, on ritual or priest, or on anything which attracts or appeals to the senses.

That in the chamber with closed doors you can meet with God; that in deeds for which you get no credit or recognition you can serve God; that the notice of your fellow men should constitute a real danger to religion—all this implies a new era in the history of religion and of the world.

It will at once occur to us that the Christian Church has by no means grasped the thought of Jesus in its entirety. The ceremonialism of the older religions surged over the Church, and appeared to submerge the new teaching of Jesus. Externalism gains power wherever religion decays. As the Puritan said under the *régime* of Laud, "It was suspicious that the night was approaching, because the shadows were so much longer than the body,

and ceremonies more in force than the power of godliness."* Every student of the commandments of Jesus must watch the growth of ritualism with alarm. And there is only too much truth in John Ruskin's petulant remark: "Our national religion is the performance of church ceremonies, and preaching of soporific truths (or untruths) to keep the mob quietly at work while we amuse ourselves."

But it would be foolish to forget that underlying all the ceremonialism of the Christian Church is the Lord's new idea of religion. It is never wholly forgotten, though it may never be fully expressed. The true Christians in every Christian Church are they who have grasped the thought that their religion is not to be seen of men. On that common spiritual ground the extremes meet. The Catholic Saint who obediently meets all the outward claims of the Church, which seem so contrary to the requirements of Christ, still counts the essence of his life that inward communion and service with which no outsider may meddle; and the Quaker who, fearlessly consistent, dispenses with all outward forms, lives that beautiful hidden life in such a way that a few Quaker books, such as Fox's *Journal*, Penn's *No Cross no Crown*, or Grellet's *Life and Letters*, not to mention several much more modern,

* Neale, *History of the Puritans*, i. 583.

have become the most powerful of all our aids in living the inner life.

Some of us may hold the opinion that the forms are a real danger, and that the Catholic tendency to "do religion to be seen of men" is a distinctly anti-Christian feature of the popular system ; but none of us would or can forget that the precept of our Lord is known and obeyed by many in all Churches that bear His name. And in this we can and must rejoice.

It is not necessary, in studying the commandments of Jesus, even to take into account the place of ritual and external observances : as part of the old system which was passing away, He occasionally refers to such things ; perhaps even we may say that as a Jew He recognised them in His own practice ; but in His system of religion they have no place at all. So far as He has expounded religion, He would seem definitely to exclude them. He admits no sacred place, no sacred order of ministers, no sacred rites at all. Anything that might be seen of men He regards with a certain aversion. But on the other hand, one's religion, its depth and reality and quality, will be estimated when all thought of being seen is put aside, when worship is offered or the good deed is done in studious disregard of men's observation and judgment, with the one thought of commending oneself to God who is spirit. Certainly

it is a severe test, for many can enter into a church who cannot enter into their own hearts; many can offer acts of external worship who find inward worship insipid and meaningless; and many can perform deeds of genuine philanthropy under the spur of public approbation who would find all impulse to such deeds disappearing if it were to be stipulated that the knowledge of them should be kept a secret.

Thus the test of the true religion is found in the capacity for solitude. Can thy worship proceed when no one is there to take part in it? Can thy religious life be lived when its fires are fed only from within? Is solitude a dull misery, or a great discovery of the real and the eternal?

> When from our better selves we have too long
> Been parted by the hurrying world, and droop,
> Sick of its business, of its pleasures tired,
> How gracious, how benign is solitude!

That closet, therefore, becomes to the Christian a challenge; that busy and crowded church-life becomes to him a snare. It is easily conceivable that a man can scrupulously perform an astonishing round of religious observances, while the true chamber of worship within is closed and unvisited. It is also conceivable that the inward life, which consists in constant transactions between the soul and God, and in an unwearied offering upon the

invisible altar, may have small occasion or desire to seek the outward forms. When we lay such stress upon attending church, upon public prayers, and outward sacraments, it would be well to ask ourselves what stress our Lord laid on these things, and to remember, on the other hand, the stress He laid on the religion in secret.

When Jesus selects as His instances almsgiving, prayer, and fasting, He makes His abstract principle concrete by referring to the recognised acts of Jewish piety. In this passage He is not enjoining any of the three; but assuming that they will be done, He gives direction how to do them. In the Christian religion, as He interprets it, the instances would be enlarged, and their relative value might be altered. Almsgiving as a meritorious work disappears, and in its place comes the varied round of social and philanthropic service. Prayer assumes a much larger significance—it is an act which is to be sustained without ceasing. Fasting, on the other hand, belongs to the days of John the Baptist rather than to those of the Son of Man; its place in the religious life of the Christian is essentially private. If we fast, it must not be by order or at appointed seasons, lest we appear unto men to fast. It is easy to think of many acts of religion with which Christianity has made us familiar, acts which were

unknown to Judaism, such as the observance of the Lord's Supper, systematic preaching and teaching, devotional studies, and the whole circle of civic or professional duties, which are to be brought under the heading of the religious life for the genuine Christian. To all of these we must apply the principle which Jesus lays down in reference to almsgiving, prayer, and fasting.

Our deeds of mercy are to be unostentatious. It is a very characteristic expression: *Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth.* That implies that our charity should not only be concealed from others, but even as it were from ourselves. The deed should be done and dismissed, not brooded over with complacency, or remembered as put to our account in the ledger of the recording angel, but done heartily as unto God, and then left with Him, lest it should assume an exaggerated importance in our eyes. The philanthropic Pharisee blowing a trumpet in the street to call attention to his distribution of alms must understand that he has received his reward in such admiration as he receives from his fellow men.

Our Lord has revolutionised the idea of prayer. The Israelite was bound to recite the *Shema* (Deut. vi. 4–9; xi. 13–21; Num. xv. 37–41), with several benedictions, twice every day. And in addition the

Shemoneh Esreh had to be offered morning, noon, and evening. But these edifying regulations were made the subject of such casuistical hair-splitting as seems to rob the exercise of the very meaning of prayer. The morning *Shema* may be said "as soon as one can distinguish between blue and white. R. Eliezer says, between blue and leek-green." The question was seriously discussed whether and under what circumstances salutations might be made while praying the *Shema*. R. Meir allowed that salutations of reverence might be given and returned at the natural breaks, but in the middle only the salutation of fear might be made and returned. R. Jehudah permits the return of the salutation of reverence in the middle, and at the breaks the return of the salutation of every one. He who prayed in a wrong order had not done his duty. He who made a mistake had to begin again. Workmen might pray upon the wall or in a tree.*

* Schürer, *Jewish People in the Time of Christ*, ii. 2, p. 116; *cf.* also Latham's *Pastor Pastorum*, p. 155. To men at that time "a religion was not a religion at all unless it included a *regimen*, unless it parcelled out their days according to hours of prayer and times of fasting. With such a distinctive rule John provided his followers. He taught them to pray (Luke xi. 1), he accustomed them to voluntary fasts (Luke v. 33), and on some points of ceremonial, such as purification, he may have had tenets of his own (John iii. 25)."

Such was the praying of the most religious part of the most religious nation when Jesus came. One sees the good Jew reciting his prayers aloud in public, with his eye open to return the greeting of the passer-by, and his mind sufficiently unoccupied to reflect whether the person to be greeted was one who demanded recognition from reverence or fear or chance goodwill. Such is the praying which is still held efficacious in Roman Catholic churches; where the rosary enables the votary to repeat a certain number of *Ave Marias* and *Pater Nosters* while the eye ranges over the objects in the church, and the mind is occupied with other things.*

It is a totally new conception of prayer when one is told to enter a secret place, to be seen and heard by no one, and then and thus to commune with the Father. At once it becomes impossible to pray with a wandering attention. Mechanical forms are useless. Everything depends on the actual contact between the soul and God, actual and conscious on both sides.

> Speak to Him thou, for He hears, and spirit with spirit can meet.

* A girl in a convent, the other day, complained to the nuns that the prayers were recited so fast that she could not follow them. The answer was that there were so many to say, that, unless they were said very fast, they could not be got through in the time. That is the pre-Christian idea of prayer.

It may seem that in giving the prescribed formula of the *Pater Noster* our Lord countenanced the set forms of prayer which so easily dispense with thought and intention. And it is remarkable that precisely this form becomes the subject in Catholicism of the vain repetition which He condemns. Indeed, the Catholic, as distinct from the Christian, view of prayer is that, in order to gain our object, we should not make that particular request, but offer up so many *Pater Nosters*, precisely as we pay so many coins for a thing according to its price. The formulæ of prayer become tokens, money which is current in the market of heaven. But it is difficult with this passage before us to believe that such was the Lord's intention in saying, *After this manner therefore pray ye.* Many Christian men have refused to use the formula regularly, believing that *after this manner* distinctly implies that not the words but the fashion of the prayer is authoritative. It is, as Dr. Bruce has said, the A B C of prayer. It furnishes the letters out of which our petitions are to be spelt. The brevity and directness, the subordination of personal wants to the desire for the kingdom, the sense of coming to Our Father, these are the qualities of prayer which He would have us seek after when we are shaping our own petitions. And that it is not to be used as a

formula, but only with a vivid sense of its significance for ouselves, is shown by the way in which our Lord passes at once to an exposition of a certain point. To forgive is the condition of being forgiven. In vain will the formula of Our Father be employed by one who has not forgiven his enemies. And may we not say, in vain will it be employed unless the heart has risen to the point of genuinely desiring these petitions, and in this order?

With regard to fasting, it is not possible to say that our Lord enjoins it. In the one place where it might seem to be countenanced as a means of accomplishing spiritual work (Matt. xvii. 21; Mark. ix. 29) the authority for the word is so weak that it must be regarded as an ecclesiastical interpolation in the MSS. where it occurs. Yet it appears as a practice among the first disciples (*e.g.*, Acts xiii. 2). And the experience of many generations has demonstated its value. Bramwell, the great Methodist preacher, used to spend days in fasting and prayer, and out of these exercises proceeded his power in awakening and converting souls. And it would be futile to deny that, when all idea of merit or self-mortification is dismissed, fasting as an actual means to a spiritual end yields rich results. But in the religion of Jesus it is essential that the practice should not attract attention. The emaciated face of the ascetic

makes a strong appeal to the popular imagination. There is an obvious temptation to fast and flagellate and torment oneself in order to obtain spiritual dominance over men. In the remarkable life of Vianney, the curé of Ars, it is evident that such austerities established his peculiar power in a Catholic population. But it is not possible to reconcile such practices and such influences with the commandment of Jesus. Unless fasting can be accomplished in secret and without the effects which win the notice, the compassion, and the admiration of men, it would be better not to practise it at all. For the one definite commandment of our Lord on the subject is : *that thou be not seen of men to fast.*

It is not perhaps necessary to push the application of this principle of secrecy to all the departments of the religious life as it has developed in the Christian Church. It must be only too plain what a subtle peril lurks in frequent communions, especially in the early mornings, which give an appearance of exceptional piety. Every preacher knows the hideous snares lurking in the publicity and the excitement which accompany his work. Every attempt to carry out the Christian ideal in business, in politics, or in society, is beset with the temptation to make a show to be seen of men. And our Lord's principle

requires us to mortify our vanity, to dismiss from our thoughts the approbation of others, and to do all with the sole and secret purpose to receive the approbation of our Father. It is a salutary principle; in carrying it out lies the great struggle of the Christian life.

This commandment, then, leads to what the Apostle called "a life hidden with Christ in God," a life which is determined in its character by Christ, and is maintained in secret with God. In vain will the most observant eye attempt to detect its springs and movements in another; its impenetrable secrecy preserves it from the taint of observation. Each man, therefore, is entirely confined to the task of realising it in himself. Life in the kingdom of God becomes more and more, as life advances, a converse with God, which breaks away from all earthly considerations, ignores all human judgments, and seeks its satisfaction in God alone.

And as one makes trial of this life in simple obedience to Jesus, the reconciliation is found between this and what might at first sight appear the absolutely contradictory command of Matt. v. 16, *Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.* It is the beautiful paradox of the Christian life that it only shines before men when it has

entirely renounced the idea of doing its religion to be seen of men; or in other words, the light being derived, and the works being the work of God, the supreme occupation is to receive the light from God, and to be the implement of His work, so that when men see, they do not think of glorifying any one except the Father which is in heaven.

Let your light shine before men is not therefore inconsistent with *Take heed that ye do not your righteousness before men*, but rather the two condition each other. There is no way of letting the light shine before men except that of ignoring men and their judgments altogether, and living the scrupulous life of secret prayer, of self-surrender, and of unostentatious service. It was one of Jowett's beautiful sayings, that a man may accomplish much good in this world if he is not concerned to get the credit of it himself. Might he not also have said that a man can accomplish no good while he is concerned to get the credit of it himself?

But the saying exactly indicates the outcome of the commandment of Jesus. *Lucernatus* is one who has learnt to obey this commandment, and his mode of life would be well worthy of study if it could be observed. In an assembly for prayer he will seldom pray, and then briefly, so that he is charged with

being hardly a believer in prayer at all.* But each morning finds him in his closet pouring out

> True prayers
> That will be up at heaven and enter there
> Ere sunrise.

And several times in the day he withdraws into his office or his study, and is well content to have it supposed that he is getting a sleep or dozing over the paper. But his occupation is of another kind. He is regarded as niggardly in his gifts, because he never gives anything under his own name or where he might get the credit of it. Guests at his table consider him hearty in his enjoyment of food, and one hears it said that he is a *bon vivant.* Who, therefore, would believe it, if it were asserted that he frequently fasts, especially when he has any important undertaking in hand? There is probably, therefore, no one in the town but thinks himself as good a man as *Lucernatus*, and his great recommendation in some companies is that he never makes any

* See the story quoted by Dr. Bruce in *The Training of the Twelve*, p. 225. Sir Matthew Hale was considered by the zealous not converted, because he did not attend prayer meetings. But Baxter said: "I that have heard and read his serious expressions of the concernments of eternity, and seen his love to all good men, and the blamelessness of his life, thought better of his piety than of my own."

one feel uncomfortable by his goodness. People of very indifferent character freely mingle with him and even in a manner patronise him.

But the remarkable fact is that while no one thinks anything of him, there are few people who exercise a wider or more constant influence. Many whom he has helped in time of distress half guess that the help came from him, and their gratitude is the greater because he seems not to know or recall it himself. Few can remember him saying anything on religion, and yet many date their religious life from an hour spent with him. On those rare occasions when he has opened his lips in prayer, some two or three have been led to begin the habit of prayer.

It is on record that once *Lucernatus* became involved in a religious discussion. His opponent had the best of it, and bore him down on all sides, until with a smile he fell into silence. But it was his opponent that was convinced and altered his mind.

And thus I have heard it said that *Lucernatus* is like the keeper of a lighthouse: he never goes out on the stormy sea to steer the vessels into port; he seems never to offer rebuke or advice; but being entirely occupied in the task of keeping his light burning and his lantern bright, the rays of truth and goodness flash out on every side, and innumer-

able vessels make the port through his unconscious light.

It was, then, a deep truth which Jesus touched when in a commandment He developed the thought of a religious life in the unseen chamber, lived with Him who seeth in secret, the reward of which is by-and-bye.

CHAPTER VIII

SEEK FIRST THE KINGDOM

THE paragraph of the sermon which begins, Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth (Matt. vi. 19–34), is one that may easily be misunderstood. By taking isolated texts, instead of observing the closely compacted thought of the whole, and by taking the first meaning of the words, instead of accepting the modification which results from fusing together, some have represented the commandment as a condemnation of thrift and prudence. It would be more correct to say that the purpose of Jesus is to teach the only thrift and prudence which are worthy of spiritual beings. The key to the passage is found in the words, *Seek first the kingdom* (*sc.* of God) *and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.* Those spiritual and inward aims which Jesus unfolds in the sermon, under the title of the Kingdom, are the true object of desire and toil. The aims which ordinarily occupy men's

minds, the accumulation of wealth, the provision of food and raiment, are, as the sole aims, unworthy of beings who are or may become the children of God.

Suppose we cover the whole conception of life which Jesus advocates under the term Kingdom of God;* and suppose we cover the common conceptions of life under the term Mammon. They are only figurative terms, but they enable us to handle conveniently the great and diverse facts of life with which we are dealing. These two conceptions of life are in a sense rivals, and mutually exclusive. If Mammon is master, the kingdom of God sinks into the background; the laws of the kingdom become faint and invalid; and in the long run God retires from the soul altogether. If, on the other hand, the kingdom of God is supreme, if its laws are obeyed, and if every thought is brought into subjection to the sovereign, Mammon as an authority disappears. Indeed, Mammon, for all his appearance of golden glory and solid weight, is but an insubstantial phantom, that vanishes so soon as it is challenged. Mammon as an authority disappears, and the material things in which he placed the idea of good, wealth, food and raiment, assume their

* Perhaps the author may be allowed to refer to the chapter on "The Kingdom of God" in his *Teaching of Jesus*.

proper position as instruments freely wielded and supplied by the creative will of God.

To cherish the two conceptions of life, and to treat them as coordinate authorities, is impossible. To make these material goods the real object, and to introduce certain religious ends to fill the interstices or to give colour to the whole, is what no man can do; though it is one of the many self-delusions of the soul that one can arrive at such a compromise, and so make the best of both worlds.* But as the two ends are incompatible, it is necessary to choose one or the other. To choose both will produce the same kind of confusion in the soul that the disease of double-sight produces in the body. And just as a diseased eye means that the body is left in darkness, so this disease of divided aims and impossible reconciliations leaves the whole inner life in absolute darkness. If the choice of aims is all in confusion, that choice which ought to be the eye of the soul, the confusion must be unrelieved and irremediable.

Now this is the point of view from which the teaching of the paragraph is conceived. Strictly speaking, Jesus is giving no judgment upon the saving of money, upon putting by for a rainy day,

* See Prof. Bruce on this point in *The Training of the Twelve*, p. 180.

upon the question of capital invested or capital borrowed, or upon the duty of working to provide food and raiment. It is impossible, without violence, to wrest His words into an expression of opinion on these subjects, with which He is not concerned. But looking at the common pursuits of life, the piling up of wealth, and the absorption in the task of obtaining food and raiment, He says that to be occupied in these uncertain and degrading pursuits, and to regard them as the be-all and the end-all of human life, reduces human life to confusion and darkness. Light and meaning come into life only when the higher end, the kingdom of God, is conceived; when men begin to live for ideal ends, when they realise the worth of the soul and the meaning of righteousness, when the will of God becomes the end of life, and the beautiful eternal laws of conduct which He is expounding become the rule of living. And when this higher end, the kingdom of God, is conceived, the making of wealth and the provision of food and raiment assume a new and secondary position; they are the mere accidents of earthly life, necessary so long as earthly life is maintained, but of no permanent value. These earthly goods are to be sought and obtained as means to a higher end; and it must be understood that God, who has appointed the higher end, and yet has ordained earthly

life, will Himself guarantee the necessaries to the obedient subjects of His kingdom.

But this point of view brings with it a freedom from anxious thought or care. The ordinary duties of life, by which money is earned and raiment and food are provided, are cheerfully done. There is a healthy pleasure in steady work. But there need be no sordid anxiety, for God, who is bent on the training and development of the soul, will take care that, so long as the training and development demand an earthly embodiment, the means of maintaining an earthly life will be provided. The children of the kingdom may not see how the morrow will be provided for—or even this evening; but their confidence in God is unquestioning, and from it their serenity flows.

Set free from present sorrow
 We cheerfully can say,
E'en let the unknown morrow
 Bring with it what it may;
It can bring with it nothing
 But He will bear us through;
Who gives the lilies clothing
 Will clothe His people too.
Beneath the spreading heavens
 No creature but is fed;
And He who feeds the ravens
 Will give His children bread.

But if we have now obtained the clue to the whole

passage we may touch with a surer hand on the details. The kingdom of God is to be first and foremost; indeed, it is to occupy the only place everything else being included according to its requirements or restrictions. The real treasure which we are aiming at and toiling for is that life in God which cannot be destroyed or filched away. On this our heart is set. For this we scorn delights and live laborious days. For this we pore over the laws of the kingdom. This drives us to Jesus, and leads us to cast ourselves on Him in faith. We desire to pile up treasure, but it is treasure of the soul, developments of character, spiritual susceptibilities, habits of devotion, insight, faith, spiritual power, delight in God, ability to serve, and to carry out His will. These treasures become more desirable the larger our store of them.

Crescit amor nummi quantum ipsa pecunia crescit.

We long to add field to field, and so to increase our inheritance, but they are the "sweet fields beyond the swelling flood, dressed in living green," that we long for. We are consumed with a great avarice; we covet earnestly the greater gifts, we are avid of God.

But how does this affect our relation to earthly wealth? It makes us indifferent to it. We may feel it necessary to provide for ourselves and for our own,

knowing that if we do not we are worse than unbelievers.* We may in the natural exercise of our powers become prosperous, and have a superfluity which we rejoice to use in doing good. We may keep money for future use or invest it in honourable undertakings, realising that nothing serves mankind better than the wise use of capital; or we may give largely to direct objects of philanthropy and religion. These uses of money are determined not by this passage, which does not refer to them, but by other considerations, which we shall glance at later. But the one fixed point is that this money is not *our treasure* at all. It may at any moment disappear. Our treasure is wholly independent of it. If it goes we are no poorer; while it stays we are no richer. Money in our hands is not, and cannot be, Mammon; that is, it can never assume a kind of personality and authority, become an object in itself, or presume to regulate the course of a life which is entirely subject to the kingdom of God.

But it is quite probable, perhaps even more than probable, that life in the kingdom will not bring wealth at all. The most our Sovereign asked from the world was food and rainment; lodging He did not demand, and even food He could go without. By His example and precept He maintained that

* 1 Tim. v. 8.

having food and raiment we should be therewith content. And for the true children of God the only concern with temporal things will usually be to get enough to maintain life. Preoccupied with the kingdom of God, and yet working with their own hands to maintain themselves, they are to seek the things they have need of from God Himself, and not to admit into their hearts any anxious care. The reasons for this security Jesus develops in a very characteristic and beautiful way. He does not preach the contempt of the body which asceticism encourages: far from it, soul and body have an equal value in His eyes. It would not occur to Him to say, "Is not the soul more than the body?" What he says, *Is not the soul more than the food, and is not the body more than the raiment?* The point of the question being, as the following arguments show, that if God is concerned to make a living being, body and soul, He is surely concerned to provide the mere material substances, bread and water, and wool and linen, for food and clothing. Suddenly one's attention is concentrated on the fact that man is the noblest work of God. The human being, compact of body and soul, is His highest thought manifested on this earth. Men become precious in His sight;*

* "How much then is a man of more value than a sheep!" Matt. xii. 12.

their price is estimated by rising up from the inanimate or the brute creation, step by step, observing the care which God bestows upon all, and at last arguing to His concern for these creatures who occupy the summit of creation;

Flowers of Thy heart, O God, are they.

This value of a man as such is the creation of Jesus. To every one else the human being as such is the cheapest thing on earth. What we value is the dress or the badge he wears, and the house he dwells in. A man who sits at a good table, wears fashionable clothes, and has the tone of society, appears to us worth so much more than one who eats plain fare, wears hodden grey, and speaks a homely speech, that we give him many more votes in the management of affairs. The former is treated with a deference which is due to God; the latter with a disdain which is hardly due to the brute. We think it an astonishing stroke of genius when a poet in the humble ranks strikes out the sentiment,

The rank is but the guinea stamp,
The man's the gold for a' that.

But with Jesus that sentiment was too obvious to require expression. Lazarus in rags and sores stood for precisely as much as Dives in purple and fine linen. To Jesus the worth of a man appears as the

summit of an ascending scale. His Father takes infinite pains with the mere grass of the field which is trodden underfoot or cast into the oven; the shapes, the colours, the contrivances, the ingenuity of plants imply an infinite wisdom, and delicacy, and power. Consider the flowers, which in the spring cover with a variegated carpet the whole land in which Jesus spoke; or consider the flowers which here in England, sparser and soberer, yet fill the modern mind with inexplicable delight, and move in it thoughts which lie too deep for tears. Watch the pale patches of primroses along the banks and in the fields, and the modest purple of the intersprinkled violets; surprise a copse waving with white anemones; or range a meadow of silver and gold, pied with the cuckoo-pint and the cowslip; or mark the ethereal film of the bluebells which has penetrated the woods. Walk round a summer garden or go into the glasshouses where the patience and skill of man have co-operated with the fecundity of nature to bring out the infinite variety and beauty of the thoughts of God. All this wealth of love and care is expended on the vegetable kingdom, the tapestry which hangs in the mere porch of the house of organic life.

Suppose one should follow, under the guidance of Jesus, the splendid and ordered ascent of life, as it

is presented by modern science, and clinch the argument at every step. Look at those sea-anemones, on the borderland of the vegetable and animal kingdoms, blossoming in the depths of the sea. Study the life of the fish in the watery ways. Was Frank Buckland's death-bed argument extravagant—was it not on the lines of the thought of Jesus—"God, who takes such care of all the little fishes, will not forget their inspector"? But the thought of Jesus specially hovered over the birds, the busy, joyous denizens of the air, that flit and soar and carol with delight, making the spring earth lively with expectation, and the spring heavens musical with song. They are not able like us to sow and to reap, and to provide by ordered industry for the chances of the seasons and the unknown times; their barns are simple and precarious enough, and their food seems but the hazard of a thousand conflicting laws. But even so, they are innumerable, they are irrepressible. Your Father feeds them. Stupid farmers shoot them, grudging them a handful of corn and fruit for their services in field and garden; heartless women demand their death to adorn their bonnets, or to make with their soft plumage a single garment at the cost of a thousand lives; naturalists destroy them for the pride of putting their stuffed skeletons in museums, where the faded colours and

the ruffled plumes appeal pathetically to God and man. But in spite of all the ruthless slaughter and the uncertain fare, the perilous migrations, the stormy seas, and the delusive lighthouses, these bright creatures of the air are sustained by the hand of God. On His window-sill they are fed in the hard winters; in His coverts they are preserved against the poaching instincts of man and beast.

And if the irrational creatures, which do not rise to the levels of personality, or the conscious recognition of God, are thus the objects of the Father's care, how much more, argues Jesus, will He provide for the souls of men, His dearest earthly treasure?

If the kingdom of God has become a reality, if one has learned to recognise its laws and its Sovereign, however humbled the soul may be, it cannot miss its high dignity and importance in the eyes of God; and an irresistible argument bears one to the conclusion which Jesus states with such exquisite simplicity and authority. Anxiety and care die away.

> Lord, it belongs not to my care
> Whether I die or live;
> To love and serve Thee is my share,
> And that Thy grace must give.

And thus the divine contentment of the kingdom rests not upon sentiment, but upon the recognition of truth. It is the truth that makes us free. "The

essential difference," says Fénelon, "between Babylon and the City of God is, that the inhabitant of Babylon, however intoxicated with worldly prosperity, has an indefinable heart's craving, which cries, Not enough! I have not all I want; and yet more, I have that which I want not! But on the contrary, the inhabitant of the Holy City bears in his heart a perpetual *fiat* and *amen*. He wills to bear all his troubles, and does not desire any of the good things which God withholds. Ask him for what he wishes, and he will tell you that he wishes precisely the thing that is. God's will at the actual moment is that daily bread which is better than all else; he desires all that God appoints in and for him. 'Thou shalt honour him,' Isaiah says, 'not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words' (Is. lviii. 3). And so it is said of the new Jerusalem, *Vocaberis voluntas mea in eâ.*"* Our Lord has given us a rational conviction that we, as living and reasoning souls, are precious in His sight, and that our interests, material and spiritual, are His care. Whoever

* Fénelon's *Letters to Men*. Letter lxxiii. The last text is from the Vulgate of Is. lxii. 4. The original, "Thou shalt be called Hephzi-bah" (my delight is in thee), would not serve so well as the Latin misrendering, "Thou shalt be called, My will in her."

believes this finds His goings established, he enters into the peace which passes understanding. Under the clear heaven of God's fatherly love, who can murmur?

> Can cark or cave or envy have a part
> In this wide liberality of blue?

But there comes to hand as an apposite illustration of this chapter a concrete example of a life lived in the spirit of this law. It was the life of that strikingly original painter, James Smetham. He worked steadily for an ideal in Art, foregoing popular applause, training himself with the serenity of one who "has Forever." His devotion to Christ and His Church seemed to minister to his art, and his art ministered to his devotion. No one who has seen his picture of the Disciples plucking the ears of corn can forget it, because the spirit of Christ breathes in the whole composition. There is a passage in one of his letters which forms a commentary on the Sermon on the Mount, and particularly on the part of it that is now before us. The joy is Christ's, the peace is Christ's, and may we not say that the bright humour is Christ's? For if we were in Christ's spirit all the day long, sharing His outlook, and engaged in His work, we should enjoy more gaiety, and more of that laughter which refreshes and softens the soul. The world's humour

is forced and tiring, but in the house of the Father smiles play about all lips, and the heart is at leisure for mirth which brings no sadness.

"How much depends on the way you put things to yourself," writes Smetham. "In the family read that part of the Sermon on the Mount which forbids care, and wait to work humbly and thankfully, glad to be able by ever so much labour to paint a picture worth a few pounds. 'Another gospel' might have made me look on myself as a neglected genius, and I might have sworn bitterly all day, or dropped work in disgust and gone off loafing to a studio to infect some other 'genius' with my discontent. But bless the Lord, O my soul! No, quite the reverse. How carefully I painted my market-woman with her hens in a basket, thankful not to be a Leicester stockinger at four and sixpence a week! and when a tired feeling came over me, a flush of divine philosophy,

> Not harsh nor crabbèd, as dull fools suppose,
> But musical as is Apollo's lute,

sent me on spinning again, running and not weary, walking and not faint." And with Smetham's philosophy the Leicester stockinger, at four and sixpence a week, would have been as content as he.

"What *is* content?" asks this student of the

Sermon on the Mount. "The true answer to that is a world of bliss and rest. It is not helpless submission to necessity. It is not the fulfilment of our roving desires. It is a sublime condition, the product of knowledge and faith and hope and love. One of its conditions is the perception of our proper place in the universe, and the belief that we have strictly a vocation. Another is that cheerful humility of spirit which honour upholds, which makes no extravagant demands on the universe or on Providence. Another is the alchymic eye to see much in little, the spirit which made the old woman say to Bishop Burnet, as she held up her crust, 'All this and Christ.'"

That is the wisdom of Christ which comes from above. A man who has so learnt of Christ is always well-found and perfectly at his ease. "His feet are on a rock," to quote one word more from Smetham, "his goings (so far) established, with a new song in his mouth and joy on his head, and four and sixpence this blessed moment in his pocket, besides some postage stamps." Such a man has laid up treasures in heaven where neither moth nor rust can corrupt.

It is hard to tear oneself away from the delightful theme of that freedom from all anxiety which is the reward of those who follow Christ. A large book would speedily grow under one's hand if one were to

set down the testimonies of those who, in this world of pain and toil and uncertainty, have been able to witness that the faith which Jesus commends brings with it the peace which He promises. But we may perhaps indulge in one more glimpse into the watered garden of the soul, when God has been at work there. Here is a letter of Philip Doddridge's, addressed to his wife. Both of them were delicate in health; he lived and worked in dead and difficult times; but what could be more free from care than this? The date is October 31, 1742. "It may seem strange to say it, but really so it is, I hardly feel that I want anything. I often think of you and pray for you, and bless God on your account, and please myself with the hope of many comfortable days with you; yet I am not at all anxious about your return, nor indeed about anything else. And the reason, the great and sufficient reason, is that I have more of the presence of God with me than I remember ever to have enjoyed in any one month of my life. He enables me to live for Him, and to live with Him. When I awake in the morning, which is always before it is light, I address myself to Him and converse with Him; speak to Him when I am lighting my candle and putting on my clothes; and have often more delight in coming out of my chamber, though it be hardly a quarter of an hour after my

awakening, than I have enjoyed for whole days, or perhaps weeks, of my life. He meets me in my study, in secret, in family devotions. It is pleasant to read, pleasant to compose, pleasant to converse with my friends at home, pleasant to visit those abroad—the poor, the sick; pleasant to write letters of necessary business, by which any good can be done; pleasant to go out and preach the Gospel to poor souls who are thirsting for it, and others dying without it; pleasant in the week-day to think how near Sabbath is; but oh, how much, much more pleasant to think how near eternity is, and how short the journey through this wilderness, and that it is but a step from earth to heaven."*

The children of the kingdom, whatever may be their earthly circumstances, are certainly to be envied. "Passing through the Valley of Weeping, they make it a place of springs, yea, the early rain covereth it with blessings. They go from strength to strength; every one of them appeareth before God" (Ps. lxxxiv. 4, 6, 7).

* Dr. Stanford's *Life of Doddridge*, p. 64.

CHAPTER IX

JUDGE NOT

Matt. vii. 1-5.

OUR Lord commands us not to judge. But it must not be supposed that He forbids us to discriminate. On the contrary, almost immediately after uttering the prohibition, Judge not, He passed to the injunction, *Beware of false prophets*, and proceeded to give the precept, *By their fruits ye shall know them.* It is one of our most pressing duties in this condition of probation to discern between good and evil men; and as, to use the proverbial expression, Satan comes to us as an angel of light, we shall get little good, and do less, in this world, if our spiritual faculties are not trained to distinguish the false prophet from the true. The "mystery of iniquity" is that evil masquerades in the guise of good. The men who have most deceived and injured their fellows are they who have assumed the infallibility of God, and represented themselves as His vice-

gerents; they use the very truths of the gospel as the weapons of their self-interested warfare; they come to us in sheep's clothing while inwardly they are ravening wolves. So far from bidding us display an innocent indulgence to these impostors, our Lord bids us note and detect them, and He gives us a plain test by which we may know them. We are to watch the effect of their teaching as it is recorded in history or exhibited in facts before our eyes. If we find that the countries in which their pretensions are accepted settle down in a moral and spiritual decay, if the morality of the gospel disappears, if "the hypocrisy of men that speak lies forbids to marry, and commands to abstain from meats which God created to be received with thanksgiving by them that believe and know the truth,"* if the standard of truthfulness declines, if honour and liberty and justice die, if, in a word, the claims of these teachers, or of this Church, issue in what Christ would call evil fruits, we are not to shrink from determining that these are false prophets.

And in the same way on the smaller scale of private life we are to exercise all the shrewdness and insight which God has given us in separating the good from the bad. The wisdom of the serpent detects evil, while the harmlessness of the dove

* 1 Tim. iv. 2.

determines our attitude to it. We find it no part of piety to ignore these most important distinctions of all. Our Lord Himself unveiled the hypocrisy of the Pharisees with an unsparing hand. The Apostles exposed iniquity with astonishing vigour and directness.* And it is a precept of Jesus to show our brother his fault privately when he has sinned against us.† One might almost say that a person who lives in obedience to the laws of Christ becomes more than commonly sensitive to evil, and shrinks with a subtle instinct from people who, though plausible and fair, are inwardly false and bad.

The single eye distinguishes with piercing clearness between good and evil, and in the presence of an eminent follower of Christ, a bad man will often "start like a guilty thing afraid."

There can be no question, therefore, of a childish ignorance, or of that invertebrate charity which confuses all distinctions, and calls evil good and good evil, when Jesus gives the command, *Judge not.*

What He means the context shows. He uses the word *Judge* in a restricted and judicial sense. He does not say that we are not to form an opinion upon men; but He says that we are not to pass sentence upon them. He does not forbid us to

* *e.g.*, Acts v.; Phil. iii. 18. † Matt xviii. 15.

decide in our own minds which are good and which are bad, which are false and which are true; but He forbids us to pass judgment on the bad and false. That is a function beyond our province; it is an invasion of the prerogative of God. We are entirely unsuited for the judicial work by the fact that we share the faults which we are tempted to condemn. The tendency to judge others constitutes in itself an obstacle in the eye which may be compared to a large fragment of wood, a beam; and this obstacle renders it impossible for us to remove the fine and filmy mote out of a brother's eye. The mere wish to judge another is an immediate proof of our incapacity.

To put it briefly, we may discriminate, but we may not criminate.

But it will be observed that the prohibition against judging others passes insensibly into a command to judge ourselves. And that command is the germ which developed into the apostolic teaching that if we would discern ourselves we might escape judgment by anticipating the corrections of God.*

The exceedingly brief and pregnant form in which the injunction is given, a form admirably adapted for popular discourse, and likely to grip the memory and remain for ever in the mind when once it has

* 1 Cor. xi. 30–32.

entered, prevents us from realising at a glance what is implied. This is, like most of the Lord's sayings, a *seed thought*—it has to lie in the soul, to be watered by faith and prayer, and then it germinates, and spreads its boughs and bears its fruit.

One of the results of meditating on His words is a discovery in ourselves. We find that we have a special tendency to judge in others sins to which we are ourselves prone. Our keenness in detecting a vice is due to our having the vice in ourselves ; like recognises like. And by a curiously subtle inconsistency, we denounce with most vehemence the sins in others which we are most likely to commit, as if we hoped to condone our own by condemning theirs. No one is so severe upon a cheat as he who is in his heart and intent dishonest. No woman is so severe on the fallen sister as she who would easily fall.

Why does *Leno* so vigorously denounce those who cringe before the great, who worm their way into society, and pander to the vices of others? It is because that is, according to his opportunities, Leno's own practice, and he is jealous of those who have been more successful than he along his own lines.

Why does *Psithyristes* rave against women as tattlers and delight in exposing their proceedings? Why is he always ready with a tale of rumour

propagated, of suspicions sown, of differences fomented, and of characters destroyed by these busy tongues? It is because he is himself a whisperer.* He comes across the underground workers traversing his own burrows.

It rather cools your zeal in judging to realise that in judging others you almost inevitably condemn yourselves. You come with the stones to cast at the adulteress, and your virtuous indignation knows no bounds; but when you find yourself in the presence of Him who uttered the Sermon on the Mount, and when He stoops down and writes, and quietly says, Let him that is without fault cast the first stone, you slink away ashamed.

Surely you can, at any rate, inveigh against Cenci, or Iago, or Richard III., or Napoleon. No; if the clear thought of Jesus has penetrated your spirit, the invective halts on the tongue, for you see coiled at your heart those same serpents of lust and deceit and murder and ambition, which might easily awake and turn you into Cenci, Iago, Richard, or Napoleon.

It is this astonishing fact which gives food to the satirist. "What makes the vanity of other persons so unbearable is that it wounds our own," says La Rochefoucauld. Or again: "We have not the

* Rom. i. 29.

courage to say that we have no faults, and that our enemies have no good qualities ; but we are not very far from believing that this is so." In Jesus there is no element of the satirist, but He has the satirist's power of exposing us to ourselves. He exposes, to change ; He wounds, to heal. But His exposure is more ruthless than that of the satirist ; His knife cuts deeper. We may be satisfied, therefore, that the inclination to judge another's faults is a subtle indication of the same faults in ourselves.

But here we begin to approach the real gist of the commandment. He would have us use the faults of others not as an occasion for judging them, but as an aid in carrying out the indispensable self-judgment. It is one of the qualities of the great masterpieces of literature that they lead us unconsciously to this self-discovery and self-judgment. Many people have observed that in following the fall of Tito Melema, in George Eliot's *Romola*, they have been led to detect in themselves those trifling acts of selfishness which are as "the little pitted specks in garnered fruit" ; they have seen how by the same imperceptible steps they might pass from weak self-indulgence to indolence, from indolence to cowardice, from cowardice to ingratitude, and from ingratitude to murder. And though that great writer is hopeless because she ignores the regenerative

and recovering forces of redemption, she is salutary in thus bringing us face to face with the possibilities hidden in our own souls. Probably every reader of Robert Louis Stevenson's *Dr. Jekyl and Mr. Hyde* will remember a similar influence. The present writer was haunted for days, after reading the book, by a sense of double consciousness, and a recognition that if the elements of his own character, good and bad, were untwisted, and worked up in two separate personalities, there would be precisely that hideous effect of an angel and a devil revealed.

In Stevenson there is a certain manly truth and faith which gives a good hope that Dr. Jekyl may win the day and Mr. Hyde may be eliminated, and so far the Christian spirit works through that wonderful *brochure.*

But what these literary creations do for us may be done, if Christ has His way, by the observed faults of our fellow men. *Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.* The fall of others is no matter for gossip and self-righteous commiseration. But it is a reason for turning inward and taking one's life to task. The sins of men, worked out on a large scale to their doleful issue, the sins which are recorded in law courts, or in stories, or in the practical experience of every man who is nearing

middle life, are enough to exercise the critical power of the wisest. But as all these sins have their counterpart in oneself, the wisest will confine his critical power to marking, condemning, and overcoming the parts of them which are within him.

But there is a plea for judging others very plausible and subtle, and with it our Lord's spirit implicitly deals. It may be said, Must we not in a measure judge men in order to do them good? Ought we not to discover and to reprove their faults? Does not the Lord's own command in Matt. xviii. 15 require us to establish ourselves as the court of first instance, and only to carry up the case to a higher court of "one or two more," or to the court of appeal in the Church, when our own decision has been ineffectual?

Now, it must be admitted that in the task of saving men this element of judgment is sometimes necessary. Where the love of sinners and of souls has become overmastering, the very power of saving love gives a certain prerogative of judging. "Truth spoken in love" reveals the thoughts of the heart, and brings out the need of the soul and the sufficiency of God. But we must be careful to insist that it is a very high and exceptional degree of disinterested love which authorises this saving function of judgment. Self must be dead, and

disinterestedness must have been established not only to one's own satisfaction, but in a way to produce a general conviction, before the process has any prospect of success. And looked at more closely, the passage in Matt. xviii. 15 seems rather to limit than to authorise the attempt at personal judgment; for it is only if the offender gives a ready hearing, that is, in cases where the truth is plain and incontrovertible, that the function is to be relied on; provision is immediately made for carrying the case to higher and more impartial courts.

But for practical guidance it is more important to look to our exemplar, Christ. If judgment is ever to be redemptive it would be so in His case, because first, He knew what was in man, second, He was perfectly disinterested, and third, He was the Son of God. But yet, while He was living the human life, a Man among men, He was emphatic in renouncing the function of judge. So far from saying that He would save men by judging them, He distinctly declared that He came not to judge but to save.

And if we contend that there is and must be something exceptional in His character and conduct, yet it is a common observation that the Christlike spirits who exercise a redemptive influence over men are precisely those who, like Him, never seem

to judge, are not even indignant with sinners, but confine their anger to hypocrisy and cruelty. The fact seems to be that when a man never attempts to judge others, but is very strict in judging himself, his presence among men produces a powerful influence in leading them to judge themselves. Thus a reprobate will remain unmoved, and even become hardened, by the severe and righteous censure of the impeccable. Each denunciation of his faults either appears unjust or too true to need stating; and in either case it is irritating. The virtuous person who passes judgment on him may have delivered his own soul, but he has not in the least delivered his brother's. If, on the other hand, the reprobate is brought into contact with one who utters no word of reproach, and does not seem to notice his sins, and if this virtuous person seems far more indignant with himself for his small failures than he is with the reprobate for his great sins, it is highly probable that a remarkable process will begin in his soul: he will discover himself; unjudged by man, he will become his own judge; unreproached and unreprimanded, he will begin to reproach and reprimand himself. And thus the vicious and the sinful are not won by the virtuous and good who judge them, but by the virtuous and good who judge them not.

In the noble tragedy of *Luria* Browning has illustrated this part of the Sermon on the Mount. Luria the Moor, strong and simple, served Florence with a perfect integrity. The ungrateful citizens rewarded him by immeshing him in their intrigues and forming plots against him. In the first part of the play, our natural tendency is to be vindictive against this ingratitude, and to wish that Luria would, as he easily could, avenge himself upon the graceless city. But as the story unfolds our feeling changes. Luria, too noble to suspect, too magnanimous to avenge his injuries, by his perfect truth and simplicity worked a change on the men who were plotting against him. The innocent man, trusting those who deserved no trust, made them trustworthy. He shamed them, and so wooed them, to goodness. The final confession is:

> His life reteaches us what life should be,
> What faith is, loyalty and simpleness,
> All once revealed, but taught us so long since . . .
> Old memories reappear, old truth returns,
> Our slow thought does its work, and all's reknown.

It may seem a paradox, but it is, after all, only the fruit of an observant experience, that we can only judge others by not judging them. When we mount the bench—we, ourselves so ignorant, so prejudiced, and so sinful—the prisoner whom we

have summoned to our bar stiffens himself in resentment, his heart burns with wrath, and his sin grows upon him. If we have the accidental power to punish him we make him no better, and if we are powerless, and only vindictive, our verdict makes him worse. But when we come and stand beside him in the dock, facing the one Judge of human hearts, and when we put our hand in his, and claim no superiority, but rather the equality of need and of desire for amendment, some spring opens in his nature; he judges himself; he wishes to be good. Hand in hand we start on the upward way.

Perhaps the reason why Jesus renounces the function of the judge, and the reason why God Himself hides His judgments, and leaves the world with the impression that He is not judging it, is that it is impossible to save men by judging them. It is when the Judge bears our sins in His own body on the tree, and not when His judgments are abroad, that men are saved.

But there is one more consideration which must disincline us to judge men. It sounds like a threat; perhaps it is really a mere statement of inevitable law. As He does not closely define in what sense He uses the words, it is better to let them convey their own meaning and produce their own effect. *Judge not, that ye be not judged; for with what*

judgment ye judge ye shall be judged, and with what measure ye mete it shall be measured unto you. The Lord's meaning is illustrated by His example more than once. The Pharisee who judged is condemned; the Publican who was judged is justified. The men who spoke scornfully of the people, *They know not the law and are accurst*, are overwhelmed with denunciation and woes; but towards the sinners who were thus despised the Lord manifested a uniform sympathy and charity. We are thus led to the conclusion that, while other sins can be forgiven, the assumption which sits in judgment on men must be punished with judgment. The servant who, when his debt was cancelled, turned to exact from his fellow servant, was sentenced to the uttermost penalty of the law. This is certainly a consideration which must give us pause, and make our judgment of others tremble on our lips and die away in silence. The verdict we are passing, and the spirit and principle of it, may have no effect on the culprit,* but they are determining the way in which we ourselves

* Two men were once discussing in Jowett's presence whether it was better to be a judge or a bishop. "The judge," said the advocate of the law, "can condemn a man to be hanged." "But the bishop," said the advocate of the Church, "can condemn him to hell." Jowett quickly interposed: "But if the judge condemns the man, he *is* hanged."

will be judged. This weapon will wheel in the air, and return to strike ourselves.

All that harshness and implacability, all that disregard of exculpatory circumstances, all that fiery impetuosity to punish, will be meted out to us. Not of course that the Judge of the whole earth can be harsh or implacable, can disregard the extenuations, or pass sentence in the heat of passion ; but the tone and temper of our own pitiless judgments will rise up in judgment against us. We think of Judge Jeffreys at the bar of God (and even in the wretched years before his early death) or we think of Torquemada before the inquisition of heaven. We do not conceive that the righteous Judge repeats those heartless brutalities and laughs at the dismay of the prisoner ; we well know that the merciful heart of God is incapable of condemning men to the tortures which were practised in the dungeons of the Inquisition. But Jeffreys and Torquemada have acquired by their devilries the devilish nature ; they stand revealed at the judgment-seat of God as the companions of devils. The jaws of hell yawn in their own ruthless hearts. And in the same way our own method of estimating people, just and kindly, or unfair and uncharitable, recoils on our own nature. When with a cruel word you blight a man's character, you may not observe it, but it is your

own character that is blighted. When you declare without hesitation that a man is a scoundrel and he deserves any punishment that can be given, you are unconsciously pronouncing your own doom.

A careful observation of men's utterances and deeds curiously confirms this teaching of Jesus, even before we pass behind the veil, and learn the full results of our actions and our lives. Some time ago there was in a Christian community known to the writer a brother of much zeal and sincerity who detected another brother in a very serious fall. He tracked him to a bad house and saw him with a certain person in a certain room. He reported the case to the community, and with all the terrible solemnity which seems to be sanctioned by the command of St. Paul, the offender was handed over to Satan that he might learn not to blaspheme. A few months passed, and the prosecutor was brought before the community himself, and charged with the same sin, in the same place, and with the same person. And he was cast in the same awful condemnation. Probably every day furnishes confirmation to our Lord's deep saying: *With what judgment ye judge ye shall be judged, and with what measure ye mete it shall be measured unto you.*

CHAPTER X

PEARLS BEFORE SWINE

Matt. vii. 6.

FOLLOWING the commandment not to judge there is a brief injunction, which seems at first sight to be out of connection with what has gone before and with what comes after: *Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast your pearls before swine, lest haply they trample them under their feet, and turn and rend you.* Although the words are frequently quoted, their relation to the teaching and commandments is seldom apprehended, any more than their connection with the context is observed.

But there is a clear connection with the thought, though perhaps not with the expression, of what Jesus has just said; and the connection may be drawn out in this way: You should as a child of the kingdom seek to benefit and to save your fellows, and your motive in getting rid of the beam in your own eye should be, partly at least, that you may

remove the mote from your brother's. This of course implies the presentation of divine truths, and an attempt to get them accepted by the brother whom you are seeking to help. But—and here comes the connection—in the use of the divine truths, the mysteries of the kingdom, the means of salvation, you must consider closely the suitability of the recipient as well as the value of the truth. For not only will truth which is unsuitable to the person, or the time, or the opportunity, be useless, but it will exasperate the unprepared heart and involve you in unnecessary trouble. It is not so much, perhaps, that truth will be profaned by being offered to the wrong person or in the wrong way, as that it will under such circumstances have precisely the opposite effect to that which is intended, and the workman of the kingdom will do harm instead of good.

Now, as the meaning of the precept begins to appear we at once note that this little parable furnishes a key to all the parables, this scrap of teaching explains the original method of Christ's teaching, and this commandment is found to be one which in a striking degree He observed in His own practice.

But perhaps we ought to allow it to strike us, as it was intended to do, by its abrupt and picturesque

intrusion into the quiet landscape of the Sermon. *Give not that which is holy to the dogs.* The sacred shewbread, or the meat of the offerings on the altar, you would not think of throwing to the dogs. The dog of course has not to the Eastern mind any of the associations which have gathered around him in the West, and especially in the North. He is not thought of as the dumb companion, the loyal and unobtrusive friend, who to many a lonely and retiring nature is the most sympathetic and the dearest of created things. No one had conceived the sentiment which is expressed in Matthew Arnold's "Geist,"* or that love which is expressed in Wordsworth's poem to a dog,

> For love, that comes wherever life and sense
> Are given by God, in thee was most intense;
> A chain of heart, a feeling of the mind,
> A tender sympathy, which did thee bind
> Not only to us men, but to thy kind.

Or in the poem "Fidelity" to the dog that watched

> * Only four years those winning ways,
> Which make me for thy presence yearn,
> Called us to pet thee or to praise,
> Dear little friend, at every turn!
>
> That loving heart, that patient soul,
> Had they indeed no longer span,
> To run their course, and reach their goal,
> And read their homily to man?

for three months beside the corpse of Gough on Helvellyn,

> How nourished here through so long time
> He knows, who gave that love sublime,
> And gave that strength of feeling, great
> Above all human estimate.

Through our love of dogs we have almost incapacitated ourselves for seeing at once the point of the parable. The dog was the fierce and predatory scavenger of the streets, an object of contempt and loathing to men. That Jesus had no such feeling Himself to the creature of His Father is shown by the beautiful story, that as all were expressing their dislike of the dead carcase of a dog, Jesus said, "I think he has beautiful teeth." But in a Palestinian town, nothing would appear a worse desecration than to give any sacred meat to the self-elected scavengers of the street. The holy food would not be holy to them, and the sight of it in those unclean jaws would fill any pious mind with horror.

That compartment of the parable is complete in itself; it expresses the utmost idea of incongruity, it suggests a sacrilege inconceivable except in ribald and abandoned men. The other compartment of the parable presents one of those miniature pictures which give so vivid a charm to all the discourse of Jesus. Conceive a swineherd—he must be a Gentile,

for no Jew would keep swine—a Gentile in some far country where prodigals might be. And in so heathen a scene fancy him feeding his swine, not with the barley grain, but with pearls—a priceless, useless food with which to fill the troughs. What madness! For these lovely jewels in a swine's snout are not so valuable as coarse grain; and not only so, but the tusked brutes, foiled of their meal, incensed against the herdsmen who has duped them, rush upon him and trample him in the slough of their styes.

The picture has only to be studied, and it tells its own tale. In dealing with men, as the guardians of sacred truths, and in our desire to feed and to bless our fellows, we have to consider their fitness to receive, and we have to beware of irritating them by the offer of the priceless mysteries when all that they are fitted to receive is earthly grain.

This command, a precept given to teachers and workers for God, virtually bids us to fall into line with the principle on which God Himself has worked, the principle which no one ever illustrated so perfectly as Jesus Himself. Here we have the explanation of development in religion, the reason why God spoke to the patriarchs in earthly symbols, to Moses in a system of types, to the Prophets in great ethical thoughts, and only in the fulness of time

spoke to the world by a Son. The whole evolution of revelation implies that revelation is a relation between God and the human mind, and God adapts His self-manifestations to the condition and the preparation of the mind. He shows Himself precisely as much and as perfectly as men are able to apprehend Him.

But here also we get the clue to our Lord's method in teaching and training His Disciples. *I have many things to say to you, but ye cannot bear them now,* is the principle which regulates His communications. With the utmost caution He revealed to them His Messiahship as they were able to bear it. Then step by step He broke to them the fact of His sufferings, the nature and the meaning of His death. And it was not till He was risen that their minds were prepared to receive in its fulness "that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name unto all the nations."*

The same principle regulated His use of parables in preaching. To them who were without it was impossible at once to communicate the truth of the kingdom. The parable served as an attraction and as a sieve. It drew men to hear, it sifted out those who were not prepared, it brought those who were ready, to seek eagerly for the meaning which was

* Luke xxiv. 47.

obviously hidden under the story.* In the statement of this truth one Evangelist gives the impression that He adopted the parable lest the people should understand and be converted (John xii. 40). But the impression, a false one, arises from the fact that Jesus, in quoting from Is. vi. 9, 10, changed the words to suit His own meaning, while the Evangelist, referring to the actual words of Isaiah, makes a quotation which is inappropriate. His meaning is clear from the passage in Matt. xiii. 13–16, where the Septuagint version is accurately transcribed, and the assertion of Jesus amounts to this : The people have hardened their hearts and become gross, so as to make their conversion difficult, and the method of parables is alone suitable for them.

It is, then, His doctrine that the truth which He has to deliver, like all other truth, requires a certain fitness in the heart that is to receive, and perhaps a suitable opportunity for its communication. The word is a key, but the key is useless unless there is a lock which it fits. The seed is all good, but the soil must be adapted if it is to bear fruit. Or again, before men will come to the light, they must learn to love the light, and they must be wooed into doing

* Perhaps it is at this point that the connection is to be found with the command to Ask, to Seek, to Knock, which follows immediately.

the will of God in order to find if the doctrine be from Him.

It is from this relation between the truth and the recipient that there springs up an economy in the delivery of truth. Nothing is plainer than that God would have all men to be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth, or than that Jesus casts the seed over all the land, and would give every kind of soil the opportunity of receiving it. But, on the other hand, where the soil is manifestly intractable, the method must be to prepare the soil before the seed is sown. Where the temper of men is such that the offer of saving power and the manifestation of divine love will provoke rather than attract, and harden rather than soften, it is both more prudent and intrinsically better to withhold the message until a change appears.

It will be observed, therefore, that this enigmatical commandment becomes a practical and necessary direction in the administration of divine truth. It should be considered how much the general contempt for the gospel, and the amazing indifference to its offers, are due to a certain feeble-forcible presentation of it, to weak and incoherent street-harangues, which offer the riches of God as if it were cheap and common, and make the blood of the covenant an unclean thing. It should be noticed how far our

ways of seeking souls are calculated to exasperate them and drive them to a more determined resistance. For dogs the holy meat is unsuitable; to give pearls instead of food to swine is irritating. In the same way there are human souls in a condition of grossness and spiritual rebellion, which will render the truths of the gospel unintelligible and unattractive. There are men so besotted, so savage, so sore, that the love of God, the atonement of Christ, the gifts of the Spirit, have at present no meaning to them; and the art of the fisher of men consists in awakening an interest and an appetite, in finding that point where the heart of the dogs and the swine can be changed into that of the man—the penitent, the believer, and the saint.*

But the principle leads us further even than this. The human mind is attracted by mystery, by a sense of beyond and behind: a veiled face seen at a window, a vision of a mountain peak through the wreathing mists, a closed garden which breathes its perfumes abroad, a vista leading we know not where, a dim historic mansion with sealed treasures, a friend who gives us the sense of unexpectedness, a work which does not come to an end, but opens up into

* See Mrs. Leila Thompson's beautiful little book *Modern Miracles* for examples of this tact and address in fishing for souls.

fresh channels, and constantly reveals new possibilities—these are the things which have an indefeasible claim upon our attention. Needless to say, the truth of God and the mystery of the gospel are rich in these elements of charm. Passing knowledge, broad and deep and long, and ever expanding into new lights and depths and reaches, unsearchable, inapprehensible, the gospel is the veiled face which shines at the window of heaven, it is a glimpse of celestial mountains, ruddy gold, or visionary in quiet sunsets, it is the *hortus inclusus* of heavenly fragrance, it is the golden staircase whose head is hidden in gleaming cloud, it looks out on a house of many mansions, it breathes eternity and the infinite, it is rich in an exhaustless personality. Intrinsically the gospel, for all its simplicity, is full of these baits and lures which lead the soul in eager curiosity from earth to heaven.

There is in Wordsworth's country a waterfall which is the type of Wordsworth himself. You approach it from a barren lake shore by a bare and treeless valley. When you are near you see a thin streak of water on the wall of hill. You might pass it, and go up the valley without further notice, if you had not come expressly to see it. But you enter the ravine—the fall is really withdrawn in a deep recess of the mountain-side—and you find yourself

in a rustic hall of musical sound. The narrow cleft, clothed with ferns and mountain ash, is lit with the white gleam, filled with the flying spray, and loud with the gentle roar, of the fall, which plunges over the ledge and leaps a hundred feet to reach the stream. You may in the mystery and beauty of that retreat go back into the vanished centuries and hear the water plunging there as it does to-day, and you may be carried onward into the future of the world, accompanied always by the same motion and murmur of the falls. All the chambers of mystery and revelation lie a little out of the beaten track, and beckon us to visit them. And the gospel intrinsically, from the moment when Jesus began to proclaim it, is by all its parables and sentences and facts, by the teaching and the passion and the empty tomb, by the vision of angels and the opened heavens, and by the tongues of fire at Pentecost and the wonders of apostolic history, full of these attractive and elusory charms. Jesus would have it to be always so—a holy meat waiting for holy hands, priceless pearls waiting for eyes that can see and appreciate. But we are able by our clumsiness and ignorance, by the coarse prosaic streak which runs all through human nature, to make it common and tedious, so that we throw the holy meat to dogs who do not value it, and permit the pearls to be trodden

underfoot by the wild boars that very properly turn and rend us.

How dull much preaching is! O the intolerable droning and drumming and pounding of the pulpit! How trivial and commonplace and childish the truth is made to appear! How inept and inappropriate are the appeals! And outside the pulpit, how unfortunate are the efforts we make to win our fellow men! We say the right thing at the wrong moment; we hit the man just in his irritable mood and exasperate it. We make the gospel cheap without commending it. We offer the love of God without love. And through the blundering and the stupidity of the disciples, the Master's beautiful truth remains unaccepted, while a generation grows up callous and indifferent, prowling for personal pleasures, or revelling in the mire of sin, like dogs and swine rather than the sons of God.

But the pregnant word of Jesus must have awakened in us the inquiry, How are we, entrusted with the holy things and with the pearls of the kingdom, to learn the right use of them? How are we to discover the appropriate recipients, the suitable opportunities, the tact and wisdom in communicating? How are we to change and prepare the natures that are not yet ready to receive the word of the kingdom?

For the answer to that very necessary inquiry we have to go to other words of the Master. In the Sermon He left it still an inquiry, unless we may assume that the answer is to be found in the promise that to those who ask it shall be given, and that they who seek shall find, which follows upon the commandment that at present occupies our attention. The full answer is found in the final promise of the Master. To become a good scribe of the kingdom, bringing out of the treasury, as occasion demands, things new and old, it is necessary that one should receive the Holy Spirit, who can lead us into all truth. The Holy Spirit not only illumines the mind and gives it tact and wisdom, but also brings the "things of Christ," *i.e.*, the life and the teaching, the power and the person, of Christ, to bear upon the souls of men.

There are some striking examples of this guidance and sustenance in the Acts of the Apostles—*e.g.*, Philip's interview with the eunuch, Peter's direction to teach Cornelius, Paul's choice of routes in his missionary journeys. There are similar instances in the lives of all eminent servants of Christ. Stephen Grellet, for example, was frequently led to particular persons, and the right message was given, though their circumstances were entirely unknown to him. Once he received an impression that he

was to preach in a certain backwoods settlement. He mounted his horse and went. But when he got there the settlers had trekked, and not a man was to be seen. In obedience to his heavenly orders, however, he entered the common-house in the midst of the clearing and preached to vacancy. Years afterwards he learnt that one of the men had returned to fetch something that was left, heard the strange voice preaching in the empty room, was overawed, received the word, and was converted. Not only so, but, carrying the news to his comrades, brought several of them with him into the kingdom, and they became preachers of the word. The work of God can only be done by the Spirit of God. Even Jesus Himself said that the words which He gave to men were what He had received from God: they were not, as it were, His own.*

Much more must it be necessary that we should receive what we give, the word of God, adapted as it must be if He gives it, for the particular occasion and person. Apart from such individual direction, and waiting on God for His guidance, we shall certainly blunder and give what is holy to the dogs; we shall cast our pearls before swine, which will trample them and rend us.

That such insight is to be gained, and that such

* John xvii. 6–8.

guidance will be given, may be judged from the nature of the commandment and promise which we must examine in the next chapter.

The door of the mystical chambers is opened to a knock; the secrets of hearts are searched by the Spirit; the gift of God is without reserve to those who ask.

CHAPTER XI

PRAY

Matt. vii. 7–12.

WE have suggested a connection between the commandment not to cast pearls before swine and the commandment contained in the subsequent verses which may be summed up in the one word: *Pray.* But we shall have to observe before we close this chapter that the three commandments, *Judge not, Cast not the pearls before swine,* and *Pray,* are bound together by the thought of our action to our neighbour, for they are clamped by the famous precept: *All things therefore whatever ye wish men to do unto you, so do ye also to them,* and we are reminded that these things are all to be regulated by the master-principle of love, for He adds the words which He used concerning the command to love: *for this is the law and the prophets.* Thus the precept *to ask, to seek, and to knock,* at once assumes a position as

part of our service to men. This is thoroughly characteristic of Jesus.

He prayeth best who loveth best.

Yes, but he who loves best will pray best, and the most effectual expression of love to men is prayer for them. When we ask for bread or clothing, it is not for ourselves alone; we say, Give *us* this day *our* daily bread. When we seek for the treasures of God it is that we may impart them to others. When we knock it is not only at the gate of heaven, but also at that door of the human heart at which Jesus Himself stands and knocks. Prayer is the method of fishing for men. By prayer we acquire tact and insight; by prayer we find the right word at the right moment; by prayer for men we conceive love for them and the desire to save them. And when we ask for the Holy Spirit, which is the first and the last petition in prayer, we desire that Pentecostal baptism which enables us to save men.

There is an unexpectedly beautiful point mentioned by Herodotus concerning the ancient Persians. "The Persian," he says, "in sacrificing does not think of seeking good things for himself alone, but he prays for the good of all the Persians and of the king; for in all the Persians he himself is included."*

* Herodotus i. 231, § 3.

That spirit pervades our Lord's teaching on prayer. Though the prayer may be private or united, the subject of it is not oneself, but others, the community which we call His Church. To pray for the Church, and to regard yourself as sufficiently considered in such a prayer because you are included in the Church, is to enter into the very spirit of the Lord's Prayer.

But before we come to reflect on His view of prayer, on the precepts He gives concerning it, on the philosophy of prayer, and on the answers to it, we cannot but be struck in the Gospels that our Lord prays as much as He bids and teaches His disciples to pray.

He prays not as a religious duty, but as a spiritual necessity. It is evident that while He was in the flesh, frequent and prolonged prayer was needed in order to maintain the divine life and to carry out the divine will. On two occasions, when work of an extraordinary character had to be done, He continued all night in prayer: once when He had selected the Twelve, the little group of men on whose ministry the perpetuation of His work depended,* and again before walking on the sea,† that miraculous evidence of His spiritual nature transcending the physical. Again, the most remarkable scene of prayer ever recorded is that in the Garden of Gethsemane.

* Luke vi. 12. † Matt. xiv. 23.

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Though He had been moving towards the Cross for months, He could not actually face it without the wrestle of prayer. It is the fact that Jesus prayed, and evidently depended much on prayer, viewed in the light of the Incarnation, that leads us to a satisfactory philosophy of prayer. The will of Jesus was in perfect harmony with the will of God, but He kept it in harmony by prayer. The Father worked through Him, inspiring the words of His teaching, and achieving the miraculous signs; but the work was continued only by prayer, so much so that the great miracle of the raising of Lazarus was preceded, of set purpose, by audible prayer. It seems irreverent to imagine the life of God ever ebbing from the soul of Jesus, but it is evident that the tide was kept at the flow by prayer. Life in the true sense of the word meant for Jesus prayer.

The inference is that in the life of the flesh, even when that life is lived by the Divine Son, and infinitely more when it is lived by imperfect human beings, prayer is the sole method of maintaining the life of God within. That is to say, there is nothing exceptional or spasmodic or occasional in prayer; it is the normal way of carrying out a spiritual, as distinct from a merely physical or intellectual, life. It is admissible to speak of prayer interfering with the order of nature, when the word "nature" is used in

a very contracted sense; but it is not admissible to speak of prayer interfering with the order of God. In the sphere of human life prayer is the order of God; it is the prayerless who interfere with His order. A simple illustration may make it clear. A person who regularly inhales fresh air is in the natural and healthy condition; when he breathes it only exceptionally or spasmodically or not at all, he is in an abnormal state which ends in disease or death. In the same way when one prays only rarely and feebly, one slips from the high order of the divine life in men; one is only in the healthy—and we might even say, using the word "nature" in its larger sense, one is only in a natural—condition when prayer is regular and constant and real.

The situation may be elucidated by an idea with which Emerson made us familiar, the idea of the Over-Soul. The soul of man exists, at times almost consciously, but always in reality, by its connection with a Soul that is above him, so vast, so penetrating, so *one*, that it is difficult to bring it under the finite category of personality. The Over-Soul is real, it is God. No soul can be really out of connection with Him; the soul cut off from Him would perish; but the soul is called to rise into the consciousness of the connection, and to become voluntarily the organ of His will. Prayer is the act by which the result is achieved.

The notion of God as a distinct Being, who occupies a definite position in space far removed from the place in which we live, makes the idea of prayer incredible. That childish notion led to idolatry, and it still leads to the localised saints and Virgins in the Catholic Church. It was that childish notion which drove Richard Jeffereys in his remarkable book, *The Story of my Heart*, to conceive a Being greater than God. God is that Being greater than the popular conception of God.

But take the notion of God which Jesus has taught us. He is very definitely the Over-Soul. He is not a Being remote from the universe, but a "Being far more deeply interfused." God is Spirit, says Jesus; that is, He is not in time and space, which are simply the moulds of our finite thought. If we can say that He is anywhere, He is in spiritual beings. As souls, we are parts of the Over-Soul. As spirits, we are sparks of the central fire, God, who is Spirit. Where we are, God is; we are, to use the strong image of the Old Testament, the breath of His nostrils, microcosms of Him the Macrocosm, for we were made in His image. Therefore,

Speak to Him, thou, for He hears, and Spirit with spirit can meet;
Closer is He than breathing, and nearer than hands or feet.

It is God within that we approach in prayer, and God within is the same God who is without, and who is within others. Prayer openly and consciously admits Him within and recognises Him there.

Just as the bays and inlets along the shore can none of them nor all of them contain the ocean, and yet may each be filled with the ocean, and welcome the sparkling waters, the freshening brine, the authentic murmur, and the secret treasures of the deep; so human souls, though none of them nor all of them can contain God, may each be filled with Him, hailing His presence, His eternal Godhead and power, and even obtaining some throbs and pulsations of His fathomless depths.

Prayer is that inward process which removes barriers and brings the ocean of God into the land-locked bay. In the first instance, Jesus does not think of prayer as anything but the inrush of the Spirit of God; for where one account gives His words: *How much more shall your heavenly Father give good things to them that ask!* a more characteristic account gives them: *How much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit!* For in the last resort that is the one prayer, it *is* prayer: Let my soul be in contact with the Over-Soul, let my little bay be flooded by the sea, let God enter and pervade, or, in other words, *Give me the Holy Spirit.*

The idea of Jesus is philosophical. Pythagoras, Plato, Emerson, Browning, will find nothing strange in it. Materialism might scout it; but Materialism stands confessedly dumb before the plain problem of life itself, and is scarcely therefore entitled to speak. The idea cannot either be called unscientific. There is a protoplasm at the foundation of all life, and this life-stuff, however inexplicable, has to be always assumed. In the same way the specific life to which no better name can be given than spiritual must have a spiritual protoplasm at its foundation. The one protoplasm is intrinsically not more incredible than the other. The one protoplasm is not more certain than the other.

God is not far away; He is immanent—

> He is not so far off as even to be near.

He is the life of our life, and the enfolding Spirit of whose fulness we receive. We open the door and remove the shutters, and He streams in.

Such considerations prepare us for some of the directions which He gives His Disciples in reference to prayer. He lays some stress on the place of prayer. He lays more stress on the need of persistency. But, given the fulfilment of His conditions—of the natural and eternal conditions—there is nothing on which He lays so

much stress as the certainty of the answers to prayer.

1. *The Place of Prayer.*—It should be a place where one is unobserved and unobserving, as free as may be from distractions. The purpose being to recover, and to realise, contact with God, the disturbing connection with men and things must be suspended. For this reason He preferred the night. And for this reason He liked a mountain for His oratory. The elastic expanse of solitude as one ascends, and the wide unhindered outlook when one has reached the summit, are favourable to prayer. The tumult of the world is far below; men and cattle, even cottages and villages, are almost too small to be distinguished; here stars come and go, and lightnings are loosened; here is no creature-life except perhaps some strong-winged and soaring bird. Here God seems approachable. As the lungs draw in the invigorating air, so the soul seems to breathe in God. Are you seeking? Here you quickly find. You knock, and the invisible doors fly open. You ask, and it is given in full discharge or in certain pledge.

But such favourable solitudes of nature are not within the reach of all, or of any always. The settled place of prayer is therefore one's secret chamber, where the door may be closed, the world

shut out and God shut in. We cannot rest content with conditions of life in which many millions have no secret chamber where they can lock themselves in with God. The proper housing of the people and the prevention of overcrowding constitute a religious question. The Church can hardly read this commandment to the people without labouring to secure for every human being the privacy of a home.

2. *Persistency.*—But if this detachment from the world is essential to prayer, persistency is no less necessary. Unless it is possible to continue always in prayer, every cessation implies certain obstacles to its renewal. There is a slow and steady approach. It is as it were a staircase which cannot be ascended at a bound. Frequently the spirit is so weighed with earthly things that it requires half an hour or so of meditation, reading, or fervent entreaty, before one is conscious of any liberty. Even the simple words *Our Father* are not lightly said. And though it may not seem difficult to enumerate your own pressing needs for deliverance from temptation or for daily bread, yet observe there is an *order* in things, and we cannot ask rightly for these personal gifts until we have got the heart to pray: *Hallowed be Thy name; Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.*

Prayer demands a steady and persistent effort; petitions do not at once become pure and direct shafts to pierce the heavens; vain repetitions are forbidden, but the request repeated again and again is commanded by the most forcible images of an importunate widow obaining redress from an unjust judge, and of an irrepressible neighbour getting loaves from a reluctant giver who has retired to rest.

The reason for this persistence is clear when it is understood that God has to be realised in the soul if true prayer is to take place; and there is a long reluctance to be overcome, a kind of atmosphere within which has to be spiritualised and sensitised.

But we need not be discouraged by this apparently severe demand. If we set ourselves to the task, resolved to persevere, it is not long before a promise of approaching blessing comes;

> There falls a sense of showers, and of the Spring.

Long before the seeker finds he is conscious that he is on the track. Before the door opens he hears movements within and the click of the rising latch. While he is yet asking, the earnest of the gift is slipped into his heart. Men ought always to pray and not to faint. Sometimes the way opens suddenly and unexpectedly. While we are pushing

with a grim discouragement against the door, it vanishes, and we are within.

May I taste that communion, Lord,
 Thy people have with Thee!
Thy Spirit daily talks with them;
 Oh, let it talk with me.
When wilt Thou come unto me, Lord?
 For till Thou dost appear
I count each moment for a day,
 Each minute for a year.*

The answer comes, as it came to Pascal: "Thou wouldst not seek me if thou hadst not already found me." The savour of His presence is perceived in the demand for it. And often, when the savour is withheld, and the soul remains very dry and heavy, it still becomes fully aware that God is within, and the petitions can rise in an opening, although still a cloudy, sky.

3. *Prayer Answered.*—All this as a subjective experience no one will be concerned to dispute. So far the philosopher, the man of science, the man of the world, will admit, however little he may practise, prayer.

But throughout His teaching Jesus unhesitatingly affirms the objective answer to prayer. He argues the point on the ground of the character of the

* Doddridge.

heavenly Father. So real and personal is God to the heart of Jesus that He applies to Him the ordinary tests of human conduct. If the unjust judge at last arouses himself to redress the widow's wrongs; if the reluctant friend at last opens the door and gives his neighbour as many loaves as he wants; if an ordinary father gives good things to his children; how much more will the heavenly Father respond to the requests of His children?

Here the world becomes sceptical. That is perhaps what we might expect of the world. But science and philosophy also become sceptical and assume an attitude of hostility to the simple faith of Jesus. But this is not what we should expect from either science or philosophy. Why should it be thought a thing incredible that God should answer prayer? The reply made is, perhaps, Because prayer is not answered. But that is begging the question. An immense range of facts in the Church's history, in Christian biography, and in the experience of men and women now living, rises up as the proof of answered prayer. If philosophy finds nothing intrinsically impossible in the facts, science is bound impartially to examine them. Suppose we range the facts under the head of psychology, they are there to be examined, and to be explained. When empirical science demanded as a test case that one ward in a

hospital should be prayed for, and another not, with the readiness to admit that if the favoured patients got better and the others did not the question of prayer would be settled, it failed to note that the test was impossible and absurd. Who could know beforehand that the cases in ward A were in any sense equal to the cases in ward B? Or what guarantee was there that while the public were praying for ward A, friends and others in secret would not be praying with far more genuine zeal for those in ward B?

But while such a test was childish, science is at liberty and even bound to examine the vast mass of evidence for answered prayer. It cannot lightly be set aside. She would inevitably reach the conclusion that as certainly as things are wrought by human activity, things are wrought by that form of activity which is called prayer.

Philosophically there can be no objection either to the inquiry or to the conclusion. For as it cannot be disputed that definite effects are produced by the action of human wills, and as it is futile to deny that many human beings engage in that exercise of subjective prayer which we have discussed, it is impossible to prove that the results of human activity are not largely produced by the abnormal action of the human spirit which is designated prayer. And as

the causal connection between human will and human action is very little understood, and the connection between results and hidden causes is understood still less, there can be no *a priori* objection to the supposition that human causality in prayer links itself to the unknown causality which is behind phenomena, and so accomplishes results which present themselves as phenomena. Indeed it is, as Shakespeare implied, a very formal and narrow philosophy which would rule the doctrine of answered prayer out of court.

And it may reasonably be urged that if a strict investigation were made into the alleged answers to prayer, the discovery would be sufficiently surprising; and on the basis of ascertained facts we might rise to a far-reaching philosophical conception, which would show

> The whole round world in every way
> Bound by gold chains about the feet of God,

and the gold chains would be prayer.

But whatever may be the rational defence of it, the commandment of Jesus is, *Pray*, and the promise is that the prayer shall be answered. And though the demonstration is not of the kind to force assent from the sceptical or the indolent, there is a demonstration, ample and amazing, which may

dispose any unbiased mind to make the prolonged experiment of prayer.*

The commandment, or, as we saw at the beginning of the chapter, the three commandments are closed by the great rule *All things therefore whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them, for this is the law and the prophets.* The connection seems to be, Judge as ye would wish to be judged; measure to others as you would expect to have measured to you; in ministering to others the word of life and labouring for their souls, consider how you would have others minister to you and labour for your salvation; and in prayer remember others as you would have them remember you. But though this is the connection, apparently limiting the application to a few particular cases, the Golden Rule is so important, and its applications are often so difficult, that it is necessary to give it a chapter to itself.

* See for example the little book, *In Answer to Prayer*, recently published by Isbister & Co. 1898.

CHAPTER XII

THE GOLDEN RULE

WE must by this time recognise that the originality of Jesus is not in the least impaired by showing that His precepts or commandments were not first uttered by His lips. It was part of His method to bring out into prominence, and to reinforce by a new emphasis, maxims which occurred in the ancient law, such as *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself*, or *I will have mercy and not sacrifice*. Indeed, if it be true that before Abraham Christ was, and that He is the light that lighteth every man coming into the world, we should fully expect that His truth would be, however dimmed or twisted by sin, in every age and in every nation. If no one of His commandments, uttered when He was in the flesh, were original, they would become, in their entirety, original by their connection with His person. His originality consists, first, in illustrating them all by His own perfect life, and second, in making

them possible for us by the communication of His Spirit.

When, therefore, we come to the Golden Rule, we can discuss with perfect freedom the question whether He formulated it, or took it over from previous teachers. What we actually find is that the thought had frequently received a partial expression before, but in a negative or a limited form. He was the first to give it a wide and positive application.

Thus it is written in the *Talmud* that a Gentile came to Rabbi Shammai and asked that the Law might be explained to him in the time that he could stand on one foot. The Rabbi lifted his staff and drove the inquirer from his presence. He then went to the rival Rabbi Hillel, who at once replied: *Do not to thy neighbour what is hateful to thyself*, that is the whole Law. The Gentile became a proselyte.*

Little as Jesus seems to be influenced by the

* Morison, *Commentary on St. Matthew, in loc*, quotes this, and also the passage from Gibbon (ch. liv. note *n*), in which the historian cites, to the prejudice of Calvin, the saying of Isocrates, 400 B.C., "What stirs your anger when done to you by others, that do not to others." Diogenes Laertius also records the answer of Aristotle to the question how we should bear ourselves to our friends, *As we would desire that they should bear themselves to us*. Seneca's maxim, *Expect from others what you do to others*, does not come very near to our text. But Confucius gave the precept, *Do not to others what you would not have them do to you.*

tedious casuistry of the Jewish schools, it is quite possible that He took over this fine saying of Hillel's, and only altered by extending it. Instead of confining it to the prohibition, Do not to others what is hateful to thyself, He widens it out to the positive command, Whatever you would have men do to you, do ye to them.

In this form, the precept becomes a condensed and ready system of morality, "a little bundle," as Luther calls it, "which every man can put into his bosom and easily carry about with him."

We saw in the last chapter that the application seemed to be specially to the three rules of conduct which had just been discussed. As it occurs in Luke, the application seems rather to be to those five commandments which occur earlier in the Sermon (Luke vi. 31). Where Matthew closes the series with *Ye shall be perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect*, Luke closes a condensed series of the same precepts with *And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise.*

It is evident that the application must be in some way limited. For if we take the precept in its breadth and literalness, it is easy to imagine cases in which it would be misleading. For example, a drinker would desire other men to give him drink, but it would be a perversion of Christ's thought to maintain

that in giving drink to others he would be fulfilling the law and the prophets. Undoubtedly many vain and egotistical persons desire above all things that men should be continually praising and even flattering them, but they will not mend matters by giving to others what they ardently wish for themselves. It is quite conceivable that with a misguided view of the application of the commandment many parents have given ruinous indulgences to their children, owing to their recollection of early deprivations. I have known a mother enervate her children by dissipating pleasures with the benevolent thought that she would not pass them through the desert and dearth of joys which she traversed in her own childhood.

We are probably right, therefore, in clinging close to the general precepts of the Sermon on the Mount, and in presupposing the character and tendency which are there enjoined, when we grasp this brief summary as a law of conduct universal. That is to say, it is the disciple of Jesus, the person who is described in the Beatitudes, who is the salt and light of the world, and who has accepted the general guidance of the laws of Jesus, and he alone, that can venture to freely act on the precept. It is assumed that what you would that men should do unto you is right and good, when you are told to do

so to them. You hunger and thirst after righteousness, you are pure in heart and would see God, you are merciful and a peacemaker, you desire above all things the kingdom of God, you do not judge, you do not worry and lecture your fellows; you have gained a certain point in the ascent of heaven. And therefore you may accept the general rule that you should do to others what you would have them do to you.

With this reminder to ourselves that the precept is limited or defined by its context in the Sermon on the Mount, we may proceed to grasp the commandment in its natural unfoldings.

There are two lines of discussion which prove fruitful. First, the attempt to act on the precept engages us in a constant effort to put ourselves into the place of others, and to imagine them in our own place. By such an attempt the stiffness of egotism insensibly dissolves into what moralists call altruism. Second, the conscientious application of the law leads us to a number of positions which are surprising, and might at first sight seem to be a contravention of the law. The higher a man's desires are for himself the less will the law be one of feebleness and indulgence in the treatment of others.

1. *Egoism merges in Altruism.*—The work of Christ is symbolised by a Cross, by a death on the cross.

And His operation upon the human heart means that the sinful ego dies. In more familiar language, self is denied. Our thought is directed to others; their rights and interests and well-being rank with our own; at the height of moral enthusiasm one could wish oneself accursed in order to save others. The question of life becomes, How to treat others? What to do for others? We hear the call from the wide fields of humanity; it is a call for help. We are conscious that we are called. We wish to respond. To help, to bless, to save, that is the absorbing passion. That thought of the poet becomes applicable:

Love took up the harp of Life and smote on all the chords
with might;
Smote the chord of Self, that, trembling, passed in music
out of sight.

In an unchristian civilisation like that of China the notion of the dead self and of the benevolent altruism is simply incredible. In a Christian civilisation, whatever critics may say, it is not only credible, but critics themselves expect its realisation, and base their satires on the apparent failures.

Where the Gospel has attained decisive victories, in the great Protestant communities, it is no exaggeration to say that the altruistic sentiment, on the whole, prevails, though it is constantly mastered or

marred by egotism. Even in Catholic countries, though altruism is much rarer, it is commoner than in Moslem or Buddhist populations. In the painful story of the loss of the *Bourgogne*, the passengers, who were Italian Catholics, and the crew, who were French Catholics, exhibited fear and the selfishness of fear. Each one tried to save himself, and, it is said, helpless women were, in the panic, beaten off from the boats by strong men whose one thought was for their own safety. Yet even in that scene of confusion and shame three priests went to and fro offering absolution to those who were about to perish.

On the other hand, here is a description of the American soldiers before Santiago, written by Mr. Kennan on the spot. The altruism of the New Testament has got deep into the heart of a nation when it exhibits itself in such circumstances. Sir Philip Sidney at Zutphen was quoted as a prodigy. The suffering American soldiers were all Philip Sidneys.

"Many of the men, as appeared from their chalky faces, gasping breath, and bloody vomiting, were in the last extremity of mortal agony; but I didn't hear a groan, a murmur, or a complaint once an hour. Occasionally a trooper under the knife of the surgeon would swear, or a beardless Cuban boy would shriek

and cry, 'O my mother, my mother!' as the surgeon reduced a compound fracture of the femur and put his legs in splints; but from the long row of wounded on the ground there came no sound or sign of weakness. They were suffering—some of them were dying—but they were strong. Many a man whose mouth was so dry and parched with thirst that he could hardly articulate would insist on my giving water first, not to him when it was his turn, but to some comrade who was more badly hurt or had suffered longer. Intense pain and the fear of death are supposed to bring out the selfish animal characteristics of man. Not a single American soldier, in all my experience in this hospital, has ever asked to be examined or treated out of his regular turn on account of the severity, painful nature, or critical state of his wound. On the contrary, they have repeatedly given way to one another, saying, 'Take this one first—he's shot through the body. I've only got a smashed foot, and I can wait.' Even the courtesies of life were not forgotten nor neglected in this valley of the shadow of death. If a man could speak at all, he said 'Thank you' or 'I thank you very much' when I gave him hard bread or water. One beardless youth who had been shot through the throat, and who told me in a husky whisper that he had had no water for thirty-six hours, tried to take a

swallow when I lifted his head. He struggled, coughed up a little bloody froth, and then whispered, 'It's no use; I can't. Never mind.'"

These plain records of a newspaper reporter are evidence that the Christian ethics are not a failure. The great saying of Jesus, *Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye to them*, had penetrated to the lines before Santiago. To be unselfish is the ideal of even a nominal Christian. But in the death of the sinful self there is the resurrection of the true Ego—the divinely made personality, the human soul which God has created to become a son of God. It is what this regenerate Ego desires that becomes the meteyard of what we should do to others. What I, the unregenerate I, would have men do unto me may be a very imperfect standard of what I should do to them. But what I—when it is no longer I, but Christ that liveth in me—would have men do unto me becomes a quick and useful guide for what I should do to them. We always come back to the one point: it is Christ as an indwelling power that makes it possible to understand or to fulfil His commandments. If His spiritual presence is ignored, even His commandments become vague and powerless as those of Seneca or Confucius.

It is necessary, therefore, to pay some attention to

this new and better self—the Christ within, in order to thoroughly elucidate the Golden Rule.

In my unregenerate state, to the question What would I have men do to me? I should probably answer: I would have them make much of me and defer to me, I would have them serve my interests and promote my wealth, I would have them overlook and condone my faults, I would have them minister to my pleasures, I would have them amuse but not instruct me, I would have them keep in the background the reminders of death and judgment, and not mention to me the authority of God, or the gospel of His grace. While one is in that condition, it would certainly seem to be doing to others as one would be done by, to please them rather than to help them, to amuse them rather than to save them.

But when my nature is renewed after the image of Him who created me, and my self is a new self rising from the grave of the old, my whole conception of what I would have men do to me is changed. I would have them be just and fair to me, but not indulgent; I would have them help me in discovering and getting rid of my faults, and above all never to flatter me; I would have them put me in mind of the eternal things which I am too prone to forget; and even in their kindest services to me I would ask them to remember that I am an immortal

being, whose perishable earthly part is as it were accidental, while the imperishable part is essential.

In a word, the whole scope and detail of what I would have men do to me widen and deepen, and consequently my whole conduct towards others alters under the operation of the law, *Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye also to them.* My altruism assumes a special form, the form of the kingdom of heaven, but a form which is neither praised nor welcomed in this present world. I have to remember that men in their unregenerate state wish done to them what I should have wished in my unregenerate state, and what I now would have men do unto me is precisely what they would not wish done unto them.

When Christ has opened your eyes, you see in every human being the image of Christ imprisoned, as it is said Michael Angelo saw the angel imprisoned in the block of marble. You know that to liberate that true image will be a work by no means pleasant to the natural man, and yet one which above all things he will one day desire had been done. Under the guidance of a higher Power you have to work on men and for men in a way which they are disposed to resent, very much as a physician works with a child, giving medicine, inflicting pain, with a view to an ultimate good.

The Golden Rule will dictate that in this saving work everything should be done with a pure love, a gentle tact, an absolute humility. The touch of the regenerative principle, reversing old habits and demanding new energies from the indolent soul, will be applied with the gentleness of Jesus; but it is inevitable that as to Him, so also to you, the awakened spirit will cry with indignation, "What have I to do with thee? Depart from me, for I am a sinful man." You will be sustained in your apparently thankless task by the recollection of Jesus, and by firmly grasping His commandment, *Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you*—and this certainly as a regenerate man you would that they should do—*do ye also unto them.*

2. But this makes it obvious that the application of the law, in His spirit, leads us to some surprising positions, and in the present world they who are best obeying the law will frequently be charged with disregarding it.

An example taken from a very common field of experience will open our eyes to the position, and then we may press on to the more important instance.

A tramp begs in the street or comes hungry to your door. The obvious application of the Golden Rule seems to be that you should immediately relieve

him. If I were in this state, you say to yourself, I should certainly desire that others should give me food and money. But, consider, and press for a moment the supposition, "If I were in this state." I should undoubtedly wish to get out of it; no state could be more hopeless. But will the chance gifts of the charitable get me out of it? So far from that, these chance gifts have got me into it. The enervating effect of careless charity is, that the springs of energy and effort and independence dry up. No one can do you a worse turn than he who destroys your manhood and reduces you to the servitude of the sluggard. Now as you press upon the causes of vagrancy and penury, you must reach the conclusion that indiscriminate charity is the root from which they grow, or at least the poisonous food on which they are nourished. You see, in a flash, that if you were in this hopeless condition, what you would really desire to be done to you would be that men should lift you out of it and set your foot on the path of self-discovery, certainly not that they should confirm you in it, and by a misjudged indulgence thrust you a little deeper in the soft mire of inefficiency. You see that in dealing with the unknown vagrant, to give him careless relief is a direct breach of the Golden Rule. You must do either less or more. You must either refuse help—the help which

may be help downwards—or you must give help, which means time and trouble and sacrifice, to really help him upwards. That means, too, that you must go to the causes of our social sores, and work to alter them. And thus you reach the paradox that he who best obeys the Golden Rule may be he who most rigorously refuses what his fellow-man, at the time and under the circumstances, most eagerly wants.

But from this most simple example we pass to one far more complex. You are a Christian. You have been roused from the condition in which you were dead in trespasses and sins. You passed through the misery and humiliation of the Slough of Despond. You fought your way through the arrows of the enemy to the Wicket-gate. You struggled to the Cross. And with your feet upon the narrow way, you began the toilsome but exhilarating journey to the Celestial City. You remember that in every stage of this awakening and regeneration and progress, you instinctively resented the influences which roused and impelled you. Now you are devoutly thankful for them. You counted men your enemies because they told you the truth. Well do I recollect the first man who attempted to bring me to Christ when I was young. I see his face as I write and bless him through my tears. I

was a boy at school, and he sent me a kindly and affectionate letter inviting me to take the momentous step, and to declare myself on the side of Christ. I never answered that letter, I never by word or look acknowledged to the writer that I had received it. I even evaded his conversation from that day forward, and he might well have supposed that he had made a blunder. But God bless him! He died a few years after—before, I think, I had taken any step in the direction which he desired. But those kind unworldly blue eyes shine in the heavens for me. I love him with a reverent affection. I cannot say how much that faithful word of the servant of God contributed to the influences which brought me eventually to Christ. But I have no hesitation now in recognising that that was one of the things which I would have men do unto me.

I look back on my life, and I find that the people who stand out in my memory, radiant and desirable, are they who have aided in my spiritual growth, they who by word or example, by exhortation or by prayer, have liberated the Christ within me, and enabled me to rise to the life that is enjoined in the Gospel. Many have helped me in many ways; gratitude gushes out towards those who have taught me, who have supported me, who have given me gifts. But those who have helped my soul are the

people who enchain my best affections. So would I have men do unto me.

In the light, therefore, of this experience the Golden Rule leads us to the conclusion that our main and constant thought towards our fellows, towards all men, should be to save them. They do not seem to desire it; they even seem to resent it. Their chilling indifference, or their abrupt rejections, must give us the feeling that we are doing to them what they would not have us do. But we know well that we are doing what we would have them do to us if the positions were reversed. It is the mystery of iniquity that men conceive a bitter contempt towards one who seeks to save them, just as the lost sheep struggles towards its doom, and never more frantically endeavours to evade the crook than when it is slipping down the cliff into the engulphing sea. The world's treatment of its Saviour is the norm of what men will do to their fellows who would save them. "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!" "Why, what evil hath He done?" The evil He has done is this, that with a sublime patience and love, pleasing not Himself, but forecasting the distant day of His saving triumph, He has appeared among men to save them!

It is the way the Master went;
Shall not the servant tread it still?

Now observe how memory works under the guidance of the Spirit. If when I resented all interference, and regarded the preacher of righteousness who called me to repentance with malignity, I had been let alone! If the plea, rejected, had been withdrawn! If the minister of Christ, repelled, had fallen silent! If God had heard my petulant cry, and if, when I rebelled against those who would have won me, He had set me in a place where no man cared for my soul! If the Bible which I regarded as dull had been taken away! If the friends who afflicted me with their pious talk had died! The soul trembles to remember how it refused and rejected its chief good, and thanks God that His ministering spirits sent out to minister to the heirs of salvation did not grow weary or discouraged. But the memory imposes an obligation. I too must not grow weary or discouraged. Men will not hear; they will detest my work for them; they will treat my interest as an intrusion, my gentle inquiries as an impertinence, my recitation of the Gospel truths as an entertaining tale, or as a weary repetition. All this I know; but because I love them, love them more than they really love themselves, I shall not give up. I shall redouble my prayers, I shall knock again and again; out in search of the treasure, I shall seek until I find.

In their blinded state they will quote to me the

Golden Rule itself: Do as you would be done by! Give us what we want, material help, worldly amusement, the food of passion, or the satisfaction of desire; and for the rest let us alone, as you would wish to be let alone. But I quote in reply the Golden Rule, as it has been interpreted to me by the experience of Christ: As I would be done by? Why, I would have some one pluck me out of the fire, rouse me from the lethargy of death, force on me the cure for the disease, which by its nature brings callousness and dislike to the cure. My brother, as I know myself, I would have you seek to save my soul, labour for it, and spend in the cause. And for that reason I must seek to save your soul. Whether, for the time, you will bear or forbear, whether you count me enemy or friend for my pains, I see clearly that there is one thing needful for you, and apart from that you get intrinsically nothing. And that one thing needful I would gain for you, at my own cost, in your own despite; because my Lord's commandment is that Whatsoever I would that men should do unto me, I must do unto them.

CHAPTER XIII

THE NARROW GATE

Matt. vii. 13, 14.

THE commandment, *Enter ye in by the narrow gate*, is given by Matthew; but in Luke xiii. 23 a different occasion imparts to it a slightly different colour. In Matthew it forms the prelude to the peroration of the Sermon on the Mount. The narrow gate and the straitened way evidently represent that course of life, and that type of character, which have been the subject of the Sermon. The way of the Beatitudes, the way of the deepened law, the way of inward religion, the way of putting the kingdom of God first, the way of not judging, of not casting pearls before swine, and yet of praying, seeking and knocking, and working for the salvation of men as we would that they should work for us; this is the way, with a narrow gate, which leads to life. This way, in a practical sense, we are to enter. False prophets teach and do not enter; professors

say Lord, Lord, but keep not the commandments. But the important point is to do. *Every one that heareth these words of mine and doeth them shall be likened unto a wise man who built his house upon the rock.* Nothing is said about the difficulty of entering. It is only implied that there is a small and unobtrusive gate, which one might miss, and that the way is definitely marked out and must not be left. That there is a difficulty, however, in entering and keeping the way is implied in other sayings recorded by Matthew, *e.g.: If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.**

Where the commandment occurs in Luke, the stress is laid upon the difficulty. The question has been asked whether there are few that be saved. Jesus said: *Strive to enter in by the narrow door; for many, I say unto you, shall seek to enter in and shall not be able.* Is this change due to a tradition, which frequently suggests itself in Luke's Gospel, settling towards an ascetic and exclusive theory of the Gospel, or is it only one of those varying shades which the Lord would, according to the circumstances, impart to His own words?

As the search of scholarship points more and more—for instance, in Professor Harnack's recent con-

* Matt. xvi. 24.

clusions—to the early and strictly contemporaneous origin of the Gospels, we are more and more compelled to regard these variants in the Synoptics and the striking differences between the Synoptists and John as the necessary complement, the change of standpoint and of shading, which is requisite to give a *stereoscopic* view of our Lord's life and teaching. We are inclined, therefore, in the present instance to combine the two accounts of Matthew and Luke, and to seek for the complete commandment of the Lord in the combination.

But one objection to the words in Luke should be at once removed. When Jesus says, *Many shall seek to enter in and shall not be able*, He by no means implies that there are people who are elected to be lost, and therefore their endeavours to enter the narrow gate would be unavailing. Rather He points to the fact that many will postpone the day of grace, and not seek to enter until the opportunity is passed. The situation is created which He described in the parable of the Ten Virgins. The procrastinators knock, but the master of the house does not answer, or only answers, *I know you not, whence you are.*

That is to say, as the words in Matthew's account imply, the right way and the wrong are essentially different. To enter the gate and walk in the way

which leads to destruction is not a possible means of arriving at life.

The matter is brought, by the simile of the way, into the domain of common sense. There are two ways. They lead in opposite directions. No sensible person expects, by taking the one, to arrive at the goal of the other. The way of life is perfectly distinct from the way of destruction. And it is impossible by the one way to miss, or by the other way to gain, eternal life.

It was this point which made the deepest impression upon our Lord's followers, and thus *The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*, our most priceless authority for the original Gospel outside of the New Testament, begins: "There are two ways, one of life and one of death, but there is much difference between the two ways. The way of life is this: First thou shalt love God who made thee, second, thy neighbour as thyself, and whatever thou wouldst not happen to thee, do not thou to another." Then follows a tolerably complete list of the Lord's commandments (chap. i.–iv.). "But the way of death is this: first of all it is evil and full of curse: murders, adulteries, lusts, fornications, thefts, idolatries, witchcrafts, sorceries, robberies, false-witnessings, hypocrisies, double-heartedness, deceit, pride, wickedness, self-will, covetousness, filthy talking,

jealousy, presumption, haughtiness, flattery. Persecutors of the good, hating truth, loving a lie, not knowing the reward of righteousness, not cleaving to that which is good nor to righteous judgment, watchful not for the good but for the evil, far from whom is meekness and patience, loving vain things, seeking after reward, not pitying the poor, not toiling with him who is vexed with toil, not knowing Him that made them, murderers of children, destroyers of the image of God, turning away from him that is in need, vexing him that is afflicted, advocates of the rich, lawless judges of the poor, wholly sinful." (ch. v.)*

We have then the witness of the *Didaché* for the view that by the narrow gate our Lord means the entrance into the path of those commandments which He laid down in the Sermon on the Mount, and by the straitened way He means the life which results from keeping them.

Bringing, therefore, to one focus the precept in

* The discovery of the *Teaching of the Twelve* by Bryennius twenty years ago is one of the romances of modern theology. Though the *Teaching* falls short of the clearness and simplicity of the Lord's own words in the Gospels, it is an invaluable witness to the supreme importance attached to those words by the first believers, before the fatal change was made from *Hear Him*, to *Hear the Church*.

its connection with the Sermon, and the precept as Luke gives it in answer to the inquiry, Are there few that be saved? we find the commandment shaping itself thus: The way that leads to life is a course of conduct such as is described in the Sermon. The character which is formed by such conduct, consistently carried out, is one that cannot perish. Such a character will be ultimately welcomed by the Lord into His joy. On the other hand, the mere nominal acceptance of His position as Lord, without entering on this course of conduct, and therefore without producing this type of character, will not win His recognition in the end. The broad, casual, dissolute life, without definite aim and without spiritual results, is only another name for death. But to enter into this course of conduct demands a resolute exertion of the will, and to walk along the way by which the right character is produced demands attention and devotion. It is a way of the Cross; that is to say, it corresponds to the way which in the Lord's case ended in the Cross. It is made possible only by the mystical faith which identifies the soul with Christ crucified. Unless one in that sense takes up the Cross and follows Him, it is not possible to be His disciple, and unless one is His disciple it is not possible to become what the way of life requires.

Thus He frankly states from the first, that apart from this conduct and character which He enjoins, and which He can realise, He will say to us at the last: *I know you not: depart from me, ye workers of iniquity.**

This, then, is the meaning of His commandment, *Enter*, or *strive to enter in by the narrow gate.* It is no real kindness to smooth it down or explain it away. The gate into every good way is narrow. For example, in the famous fresco of the Spanish Chapel at Florence, which Mr. Ruskin has interpreted for the English-speaking world, Simone Memmi has sketched the mediæval notion of education, the arts and the sciences which are to make a man thoroughly furnished for this life and the next. And the first panel of the fresco represents Wisdom pointing the little Florentine children to a narrow gate which they must enter, in order to become educated, and holding in her hand the golden fruit as a reward. All education begins in these strait and painful entrances, and proceeds along a path which, although it has austere charms of its own, does not allow divergence to the right hand or the left. One must

Spurn delights and live laborious days

* Matt. xxv. 12; Luke xiii. 27.

if anything is to be achieved in mental culture. It is a cruel kindness, and at the root mere self-indulgence, when you spare your child the pain and effort of education. Learning made easy means learning made useless. The pressure through the narrow door is as valuable as the walk to which it is the introduction. It is well for us all to know from the beginning that knowledge is not gained by any royal road, unless the royal road, indeed, is that of strenuous and self-sacrificing toil.

Or, again, the doctor becomes a charlatan when he hides from his patient the truth he knows, and tells him only the things that are pleasant. It is no doubt a difficult duty to say plainly that habits of intemperance and self-indulgence are leading to decay and death. The plain truth excites indignation, and the deluded man may dismiss his wise physician to find one who will speak things less severe. But the stern and apparently heartless practitioner is the kinder in the end. If there are some who would rather be lulled by deceitful assurances, though they may suffer and die, sensible people would rather be made miserable by knowing the facts in the hope that they may find a cure.

In the same way it is neither honest nor kind to tone down the teaching of Jesus. If we have reason to trust Him at all it would be childish to withhold

our trust when He says what we do not like. He is stern. No lips were ever firmer. But it is the sternness of the true teacher or of the good physician. No eyes were ever more quick with love. It is not the part of love to ourselves or our fellow men to gloss over His words about the narrow gate and the straitened way. We may flatter ourselves that we do it from humanity. We do it really from cowardice. We must

Trust Him not at all, or all in all.

There are two elements in this commandment which require discussion: (1) In what sense the gate is narrow and the way straitened; (2) How we are to regard the destruction to which the broad way leads.

In both points our object is to abide within the thought of Jesus Himself.

1. If we are to distinguish between the gate and the way—and the language of Jesus is too condensed and pithy for us to suppose that they mean the same thing and are merely rhetorical variants—then the narrow gate expresses that initial act of repentance and faith and that commencement of the life of following Him which occupied our attention in the first two chapters of this book. That entrance into the Christian life may aptly be described as a

narrow gate, for it is a definite and decisive act into which one is not likely to drift with a multitude by chance. Like a narrow gate, it may easily be overlooked; and the main difficulty of the Christian life is perhaps that it escapes notice altogether. Multitudes of people seem not to have so much as heard that there is a Christian life. They follow the broad path because it is broad, and they never notice that unostentatious entrance into the way of life, repentance and faith. But while it is narrow, the gate is broad enough for entrance, always provided that one is content to enter stripped and unburdened. The reason why the rich can hardly enter the kingdom of heaven is simply that riches gives an artificial sense of inflation and suggests a purely human ground of confidence. The rich man cannot be induced to surrender this uncertain support, and cannot bring himself to that reliance on the spiritual world, and that estimate of the moral and spiritual issues, which are the very essence of Christ. A man has to humble himself as a little child to enter the kingdom of heaven; he has to admire a penniless Saviour, and to choose Him before all the great names and authorities of the world.

The reason why the Pharisee cannot enter is that he is burdened with his good works. The gate is opened at a knock; there is room for all to enter

one by one, but the narrowness of the gate appears when the heart brings a burden of its own merits and works. The Pharisee boasting of his righteousness cannot get in; while the Publican, who beats upon his breast and has no imagined righteousness to bring, slips in at once.

And as the gate, though narrow, can easily be entered, and the difficulty lies not in entering but in wishing to enter, so the way itself, though straitened, is not, as we have repeatedly seen, really difficult. There is even a buoyancy and a security in it which are found in no other path. One of the approaches to Helvellyn is Striding Edge, and it has a reputation of difficulty and danger. The path runs along a rocky ridge, from which the screes fall away on either side steep and almost precipitous. Yet the path is narrow rather than difficult. It is all along distinctly marked; and though there are many points where a few steps ahead it seems impossible, and a few steps back one is puzzled to think how it could have been traversed, if you go quietly on, not looking much to the right hand or the left, it is not more difficult than many broad and grassy ways.

And the way that our Lord has described is narrow rather than difficult. It is marked out by many feet, first His own and then those of His followers for centuries. If a man has a mind to

press steadily on and to resist distractions, there is no point where it is in any sense impossible. After a while, to leave it seems more dangerous than to continue in it; the peril lies on either hand, but safety in the narrow way. The way of meekness and gentleness and love, of inward communion with God and responsibility to Him alone, of judging oneself rather than others, of single-eyed interest in the kingdom of God without the distractions of the world, is much easier and pleasanter to tread than the impossible way of compromise. And our Lord very accurately describes His yoke as easy and His burden as light, and summons us in following Him to be partakers of His joy.

And yet He says: *Strive to enter.* The word is even our English word *agonise.* It is a word borrowed from the Greek games, and it suggests the same image as St. Paul's struggle to keep his body under and to buffet himself—to be in training—in order to win the prize.

Yes, the agonising comes from the extraordinary diversions and seductions of earthly things. To get the mind even interested in the heavenly issues, to get it concentrated on the claims of Jesus, fairly to consider the competing attractions of the Father and of the world—that is where the difficulty occurs, and one has to make a steady effort to push in at the

gate. And then along the narrow way it is always the alluring sights and sounds on either hand which imperil the journey. The straitness would not matter if we would only go steadily on. And the difficulty always is in imagination rather than in reality, and strikes the observer more than the pilgrim himself. The life lived by faith in the Son of God is not accurately described as an unremitting conflict. It is the voice of the tempter that says, "Always fast and vigil? Always watch and prayer?" The saint's triumphal answer is: "While I breathe I pray."

There is an element of unreality in the lives of conventional saints. St. Antony in the desert is a picture of the religious imagination, a product of hagiography. It is full of pity and fear. But get at the real lives of the real saints, and all is very different. Bernard, surrounded by cares and duties, lives in a tranquil rapture. Thomas à Kempis only suffers from the *acedia* and the aimlessness of the monastery; his actual life with Christ is a sweet triumph. Luther or Wesley in a crowd of duties and tumults is buoyant, always rejoicing. Bunyan, Jeremy Taylor, William Law, give one a sense that if the journey pursues a straitened track, yet all its ways are pleasantness and all its paths are peace. The peace of God in a troubled world, the light of love among the loveless, the exhilarating sense of a

journey which knows and is sure of its goal—these are the characteristics of the narrow way.

Strive and agonise to enter; the effort is worth making. For beyond that little Wicket-gate, whatever may be the encounters and the trials of the way, there is no road in the world which offers such harbours of rest, such Houses of the Interpreter, such Palaces Beautiful, such visions of Delectable Mountains, such rivers of joy planted with trees that are for the healing of the nations. Ever the signposts point to the heavenly city—the way leads to life.

Has the reader considered, has he awoke and bestirred himself? Let him put forth his hand and strive "that he may win Christ and be found in Him, not having on his own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." Whoever understands what the straitened way is will choose it for its own sake, irrespective of the goal to which it leads.

2. But there is another motive for entering which Jesus does not disdain to use, and no one acquainted with the history of the Church can doubt the tremendous power that this motive has exercised, and, as it is again fully understood and believed, will exercise again.

There is no evading the statement of Jesus that the broad way leads to destruction. Æonian life and æonian death stand in His thought over against one another. The most powerful reason He can give for entering on the way which He has described, and for living the life, the laws of which are laid down in the Sermon on the Mount, is that outside of the narrow path there is no life; the broad way which many enter, leads to destruction. Certainly, while this view of Jesus has the character of an arbitrary sentence or of an ecclesiastical anathema, it is calculated to awaken the strongest antagonism in the modern mind. But, as it occurs in His teaching, it has little or nothing of a dogmatic element in it. Rather it bears the character of an observation made from experience and open to easy verification.

When He represents those on the left hand of the Judge going away to æonian punishment, because in callous selfishness they have missed all the opportunities of human ministry; or when He shows the Virgins who have not trimmed their lamps shut out from the marriage feast; or when He places the man who had received his good things here in the torment hereafter; or when He foretells a separation between the good and the bad like the separation between wheat and tares at harvest-time—He certainly does not preach a rose-coloured universalism, nor does He

give any warrant for the easy-going modern dogma that all men will be at last brought into the fold of God; but He presents positions which are reasonable and inevitable. These are not threats, but truths.

Yet we must not maintain that He describes a place of endless torture. His language is plainly figurative. And the one clear and definite point which underlies the figures is precisely the point which every analogy of life confirms, the point to which every movement of the unbelieving world manifestly tends. If opportunities are allowed to slip and become irrevocable; if the soul, warped or marred, settles down into an ossified structure which resists change; if the progress of life slays certain faculties, we have to recognise within us those dead selves on which we have not risen as on stepping stones to higher things; if there is in all things a right way and a wrong, and the wrong way cannot lead to the right end—then it is according to analogy that when the true laws of eternal life have been stated, and the conditions on which it can be obtained have been fixed, they who break the laws and reject the conditions will not obtain it. An optimistic universalism is out of analogy with experience. It can be held only as a guess or as an aspiration, and only by departing from the thought and teaching of Him who

is the likest God in human life, the Son who was in the bosom of the Father.

But there is an extraordinary confirmation of His teaching about the broad way in the attitude of those who among ourselves have rejected Christ and His laws. Their thought tends to Pessimism; and so far as they believe anything, they believe in extinction—*i.e.*, the broad path leading to destruction. What is the attitude of Nietsche or Max Nordau in Germany, or of Daudet, Loti, Guyau in France? or of Björnsen and Ibsen in Norway? The way of Jesus is surrendered or rejected, and blank destruction stares the thinker in the face.

"The highest pleasures of life," said Leopardi, "spring from illusion, and therefore it is that while children find everything in nothing, men find nothing in everything." No one who had lived by the laws of Jesus could have written that sentence. And yet every one who departs from those laws comes ultimately to that or a similar conclusion.

In Christ and His law there is life everlasting. Outside of it the world lies in darkness and the shadow of death. And it is this sorrowful truth about those who reject, confirmed by analogy and by the verdicts of unbelief, that Jesus states with uncompromising clearness when He says: *Broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be that go in thereby.*

CHAPTER XIV

GO AND DO LIKEWISE

Luke x. 37.

WE have now enumerated and reviewed the commandments which constitute the New Code, the Sermon on the Mount. But our task would be imperfectly done if we forgot that there are many other commandments of Christ, which, though they are all included in the main principles already examined, yet come out and shine, according to their occasions, very much as in the arching heavens new stars and constellations appear to the "watcher of the skies."

His commandments are a great deep, and in a sense unsearchable.* It is only an apparent hyperbole when the Evangelist says that if all that Jesus did were written the world could not hold the books; the world itself is only one leaf out of the book that He has written.†

* Psalms xxxvi. 6; Rom. xi. 33; Eph. iii. 6.

† Heb. xi. 3; Col. i. 16.

The reader of the Gospels finds His commandments flashing forth on every page, sometimes explicit, sometimes implied. There are, for instance, the injunctions given to the Twelve,* or the similar injunctions given to the Seventy,† which, though applying to certain persons and certain occasions, are rich in directions for the permanent procedure of the servants of the kingdom. Then there are few of the parables which do not imply a commandment. Again, there are commands given to individuals—such as that to the young ruler to sell all that he had—which, on reflection, are found to imply commandments of a more general kind. And lastly, the discourses in St. John are laden with commandments, such as that on worship,‡ or the injunction to eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of Man, or to believe on Him, or to abide in Him. *Receive ye the Holy Ghost* § is rightly considered a commandment rather than a gift. And the constant appeal of Jesus to the will is the reminder that all His gifts wait upon the active exercise of our powers, and the pressing into the kingdom of God.

If we were to trace out all these commandments and treat them as we have treated the Sermon on

* Matt. x. 9 *séq.*
† Luke x.
‡ John iv. 24.
§ John xx. 23.

the Mount, it would be a delightful and renumerative task, but it would swell into a study of all the words, and even of many of the actions, of Jesus.

But without unduly widening the scope of this book, we may select a few of the commandments, given outside the Sermon, and study them as explanatory or complementary to the great Code.

For this purpose I would choose the following six, not at random, but with the distinct caution that they are not exhaustive:

1. *Go thou and do likewise,* after the story of the Good Samaritan.

2. *Make to thyself friends of the Mammon of unrighteousness.*

3. *Watch.*

4. *Do this in remembrance of me.*

5. What Jesus called at the end of His life His *new commandment.* John xiii. 24.

6. *Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel, baptizing.*

Then in a concluding chapter we must endeavour to draw together the commandments of our Lord and bring ourselves into the path of obedience.

For the present we turn to the first of these six commandments.

*Go and do thou likewise.** It was a commandment

* Luke x. 37.

addressed to an individual, but, unlike a similar commandment addressed to the young ruler, it is not personal but universal in its application. For it follows on the exposition of the question, Who is my neighbour? The young ruler was told to sell all that he had, because the attachment to his money was the hindrance of his spiritual life. To Joseph of Arimathea, or Nicodemus, or even to Zaccheus the rich publican, Jesus did not give the same command. The precept was special and particular. But the command given to "a certain lawyer" equally applies to every one, for the parable of the Good Samaritan is a lesson to humanity at large. Every man's neighbour is revealed to him by the story. And the example, so far as it is a rule of conduct at all, applies to all alike. The Samaritan is not a priest or a Levite or a professional philanthropist. He is just a man. He is only called a Samaritan because to Jewish orthodoxy a Samaritan appeared something less than a man. To our ears the term Samaritan has, from this parable, assumed the accent of beneficence. To a Jew in our Lord's time it sounded as Hottentot or Matabele sounds to us.

There can therefore be no mistaking the application; it applies to all. Nor can there be any mistaking the lesson. To *do likewise* means that we

are to regard a suffering or unfortunate or ill-used fellow creature as one who *ipso facto* has a claim upon us, and we are to turn aside from our occupations, and to freely expend our money, our goods, our personal ministrations, in seeking to rescue and to heal. Wherever the authority of Jesus extends this commandment runs. It was, of course, implied in many of the precepts of the Sermon on the Mount. It was included in the Beatitudes: *Blessed are the merciful.* It was richly exemplified by the constant practice of the Lord. But by this brief, concrete instance of the Good Samaritan it sprang into a vivid meaning, and dominated the thought of the Church from the earliest times.

Nothing is more amazing in the early days of Christianity than the new streams of mercy and beneficence which were opened in a heartless society. To minister to the poor became at once the primary thought of Christians. To visit the fatherless and the widow became the liturgy of worship. To liberate captives became a form of religious exercise. Acacius, Bishop of Amida, we are told by Socrates the historian of the fifth century, sold the consecrated vases to send back in freedom 7000 Persians who had fallen into the hands of the Roman army.* "The Pagan," says Professor Schmidt, "who loved

* Socrates. *Hist. Eccl.*, vii. 21.

the world and had no hope of a future life, dreaded illness and avoided invalids. He hardly cared for the members of his own family, and in epidemics his fear led him to desert them without scruple. The sick poor were abandoned both by society and individuals, who considered them as useless to the State. . . In Christian society all was different. . . Jesus Christ had called those blessed of His Father who had visited Him in sickness in the person of the least of His brethren. . . . lepers must be loved for the miseries of their desolation. . . . During the plague of Carthage about 250 A.D. the Christians obeyed the exhortations of their Bishop Cyprian, some going themselves to minister to the sick poor, and others bringing gifts for them. . . . At Alexandria, priests, deacons, rich and powerful laymen, visited the sick or carried the dead to the cemetery. . . . Basil of Cæsarea founded a hospital which rose like a new town at the gates of Cæsarea, provided lodgings for travellers, rooms for invalids, doctors and nurses, workshops for the poor who were able to work. . . . The Church wished to be a refuge for physical sorrow and misery as well as for weary and heavy-laden souls. . . . The poor were buried with the same prayers as the rich. . . . Amongst the Christian virtues which astonished the pagans, this care for the dead, especially among the poor, was one of the

things they least understood. It was in truth the witness of a spirit profoundly different from that of paganism."*

The great commandment, then, *Go and do likewise* had an immediate and transforming effect. It has so penetrated the Christian world that we find it difficult now to realise what men are before the commandment is known. A modern observer in China, writing in the secular press, says, "Nothing is more cruel than spectral fear. To their sick and dying the Chinese often behave with revolting barbarity, not from want of natural feeling, but from fear of demons. In Yunnan a form of fever, attended with great pain and delirium, prevails; it is probably malarious, and in nine cases out of ten is fatal. A person who is attacked is deserted like a leper, the utmost done even for a parent being to place him in a solitary chamber with a vessel of water by his side. The affrighted relatives never venture nearer than to prod the victim with a pole to discover whether

* Schmidt's *Social Results of Christianity*, book ii. ch. v. Six hundred years after the Christian Era began, the spirit of the Christian Church is illustrated by the story of St. Gregory, the last Pope to be canonised. He, as Gibbon tells us in his 45th chapter, "for the death of a beggar who had perished in the streets, interdicted himself during several days from the exercise of sacerdotal functions."

any life is left. All parts of the room they say are full of devils, and even the tables and mattresses writhe about and utter voices. Into such places it is only the medical missionary or sister of mercy that enters . . . single-handed in many cases they face the risk of contagion." *

Thus the command *Go and do likewise* is the origin of all the beneficent alleviations of suffering, modern medicine, hospitals, doctors, nurses. Until Jesus the Good Physician comes not even good surgery appears. And until at His bidding doctors go out to the undoctored and unhealed races, men still perish in the misery of avoidable disease.

We cannot help looking at this story of the Good Samaritan and the commandment that follows it with a profound reverence. It is the fountain-head from which the streams of mercy, widening with the centuries, originally flowed.

But we have still to interpret the command as it applies to us at the present time. And perhaps there are three ideas which come into prominence. *First*, it is a personal service to the sufferers that is enjoined; *Second*, the vastness of social needs urges to co-operative service in relieving them; and *Third*, there are large numbers who, having *gone and done likewise*, are, on the Lord's own principles, to be

* *Daily Telegraph*, June 25, 1898.

recognised as His disciples, though they follow not with Him.

1. Obedience to His commandment will lead us out into personal service to the suffering world. The first impression of the story might be that we are at liberty to wait until suffering is directly obtruded on us. The Samaritan has compassion on one in distress when he finds him. But when the Lord, after telling his story, says *Go thou and do likewise*, He rather implies that one is to sally out with the chivalrous purpose of finding the sufferers whom one is to relieve. He sent out disciples two by two into every place whither He Himself would come with a commission to heal the sick. And certainly His spirit institutes a knight-errantry of service. Many who are not at His personal disposal are moved by the natural sentiment of pity to relieve the suffering that comes directly in their way. Do not even the Publicans the same? A rich man driving from his house to his club day by day will never concern himself with the masses of suffering and sin which fester in the back streets on either hand; still less will he go out into the East or the South of London to find the evil in a more concentrated form and to war against it. But if in his leisurely driving he stumbles across one of the poor occupants of the slum fallen faint in the street, he will probably

as a matter of course offer the police his carriage to drive the helpless creature to the hospital. And a clergyman may leave the suffering people in his parish severely alone, and yet be moved to compassion by a special applicant who knocks at his door. There is something more implied when *Go thou and do likewise* is accepted as a commandment of universal application. The robbed and wounded are along all the byways and in all the alleys of the city. The Christian is impelled to go out and compel them to come in to the healing and life of the Father's House. One who from year's end to year's end makes no serious personal effort to save and to help his fellow creatures can scarcely claim to be living in obedience to Jesus. Gifts of money are only part of this ministry. The essence of it is the personal attention: bending over the prostrate brother and pouring in the wine and oil with one's own hands, and the surrender of the beast on which one has ridden, that the unfortunate may have the advantage of the help which he needs more than the rider, touches that chord of self-sacrifice in the service of the suffering without which the best intentions of helping seldom succeed.

But the Lord did not rest content with the injunction to imitate the Samaritan. To the task of helping our fellow men He added a moving

argument, the gist of which we must try to apprehend. He identified Himself with men in such a way that He regarded service to them as rendered to His own person or withheld from it. True, He appears to limit this identification to those who in some sense He calls His brethren,* *i.e.*, those who do the will of His Father in heaven. But, in the first place, the difficulty of knowing whom He will recognise as brethren makes the duty practically co-extensive with mankind. And in the second place, the story of the Good Samaritan compels us to give a far wider extension to the term. We cannot limit His intention to those who are in some specific sense Christian, for nothing could be wider or more universal than: *a certain man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho.* He has, therefore, so stated the problem that in every suffering human being we have some reason to apprehend our Lord's person. Hungry or thirsty or naked, a stranger, a sick man or a prisoner, any one of these may easily be in effect the person of Jesus. He is in men, in even the unthankful and unbelieving; His incarnation has brought Him into a relation with man as man, so that this mystical and yet practical consideration applies: *Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these least ye did it to me.* It is difficult to imagine how our

* Matt. xxv. 40.

Lord could have more movingly claimed the service of man for man. In proportion as the faith in His divinity is assured, the duty to men whom He has identified with Himself is impressed. And in proportion as we consider what is involved in a Man claiming that whatever is done or omitted to men is done or omitted to Him, our eyes are opened to the astounding consciousness which He possessed of His divinity.

There is no legend which appears more constantly in Christendom than that of the sufferer who craves help, and then on inquiry proves to have been Christ. In the Far North the pied woodpecker is explained by a story that Christ came to a woman in a disguise and asked for bread. He miraculously multiplied her store, and she, fired with cupidity, then refused Him aid. He condemned her for her churlishness to seek her food between the bark and the tree, and when she should be all black in token of contrition, she should be restored. The woman is the woodpecker. In the story of the South the idea is still more frequent. For instance, Santa Zita has given her master's jewelled cloak to a beggar, and he takes her to task for this charity at his expense.

> But just as Zita, trembling, passed the door,
> Her master met her, and with searching eye
> He looked to see if still the cloak she wore ;
> 'Twas gone, at which his anger rose so high,

With bitter words he did his rage outpour,
 And sharp reproof, while she made no reply.
But while in loud and angry voice he spoke,
Behold appear the beggar with the cloak!

Who, thanking *Zita* kindly as he might,
 Gave back the cloak, like one in haste to go—
His face all changed and shone with heavenly light,
 And lighted hers with its reflected glow.
They tried to speak, but he had passed from sight,
 No beggar he of those that walk below!
Great comfort had he left their hearts within:
An angel of the Lord had with them been.*

The thought has passed into the heart of Christendom. To Christian men the service of the suffering or the sick assumes a mystical meaning. The sound of trouble comes as the voice of Jesus calling them to His aid. And as that sound surges up night and day from the dark places of the earth, and even from our own nominally Christian country, the Christian cannot rest unless he is employed in active beneficence. To stop his ears is to refuse the voice of Him that speaketh from heaven. *He goes to do likewise*, filled with the solemn thought that he is ministering to his Lord.

2. But the volume and variety of the Lord's cry for help widen the application of the command: *Go and do likewise.* Amateur attempts at charity in a

* *Wayside Songs of Tuscany.* The ballad of "Santa Zita."

Christian country, where the knowledge of this Christian obligation sharpens the wits of impostors, and makes the path of the would-be helper a treacherous quagmire, soon drive us to the idea of organised charity. Vast schemes of social amelioration grow up at the impulse of our Lord's commandment. These schemes, like the more individual efforts, are liable to abuse. But to cope with the monster evil of distress, of poverty, of vice, which has developed in our midst, a great and inclusive scheme seems the only feasible method. The great thought of the Salvation Army, to lay permanent ways across the gulfs which divide the submerged masses from their more fortunate brethren, was rich in suggestion. It was the magnificent dream of a great soul. Some day it may be put into practice. Pastor von Bodelschwingh's work in Germany, starting with small beginnings, has grown quietly into a gigantic scheme which covers the whole country with a network of redemptive agencies for the outcast and forlorn. It is this mode of working from within, along lines of faith and of expanding opportunities, that gives to the farm colony at Lingfield in Surrey its deep interest. This effort is moulded on that of Von Bodelschwingh in Germany, and seeks to draw upon the same sources of power. The spirit of the Good Samaritan is here carried out

into a system. The colony may be regarded as the inn where the beneficent can entrust the stripped and wounded whom they encounter to competent and loving hands, with the price of five shillings a week to take the place of the two denarii which were given to the host.

While the redemptive work of the Church remains sporadic and disconnected, it serves the purpose of giving religious employment to Christians rather than that of actually saving society, and the wheels of the great redemption tarry. The individualism of *Go thou and do likewise* is misunderstood, as if it were a call to work at random as the mood takes each of us. But a vast reform may be effected when all Christians in all Churches, seriously set upon obeying the commandment, find that the work, to cover the ground, demands unity, deliberate purpose, sustained effort. The prayer *Thy will be done upon earth as it is in heaven* will be answered when the command *Go thou and do likewise* is obeyed, not by one or two here and there, but by the Church as a whole, passionately submitting to the will and obedience of Christ.

3. But there is a fact which is full of subtle encouragement. We have seen that from the first, wherever the Spirit of Jesus came, the idea and the purpose of helping the helpless, healing the sick, and

liberating the captive became part of the constitution of society. Where Christianity is not known, not only does an inevitable selfishness prevail, not only is the thought of personal service left out of account, but the science of medicine does not develop. The vast system of healing and nursing, the honourable profession of the doctor who is not an empiric or a charlatan but a trained specialist for the treatment of disease, and of the nurse who is not a servant but a devoted ministrant, who tends the sick for the love and passion of it, are confined to the pale of Christendom. If these noble agencies exist outside the pale it is only because they have come from within it.

Now the remarkable fact is this, that owing to the ill-adjustment of religion and science in the past, a large number of those who minister to the sick are not believers in Christ. They are His product, but they do not acknowledge Him. The remark applies much less in England and America than in Continental countries. With us, though large numbers of medical students and professors are agnostics, a great proportion of the practical and successful doctors are Christians. But even with us the beneficent ministries which owe their origin to the example and teaching of Christ are largely carried on by those who do not believe in Him. How are

we to regard this army of unconscious disciples? He has perhaps sufficiently answered this question in His rebuke to the Disciples who wished to forbid a worker, working the works of Jesus, because he followed not with the company of the Disciples. It would be impertinent to claim as Christians all doctors and nurses who have marked the actions of the Samaritan and have *gone and done likewise.* If they wish to repudiate Him whose word set the good work in operation, we have no right to force them into the position of the guerrilla troops of the Christian army. But when we are considering the operation of His commandment, we cannot help noting with joy and wonder how it is obeyed by those who know His word only as a hereditary impulse of birth and training, not as a commandment addressed to them.

And our view broadens. There are multitudes of beneficent workers, public men, social reformers, who labour strenuously for the good of their fellows without any acknowledgment, almost without the knowledge, of the quarter from which they received the impulse of their lives. In a comparison of Christian with unchristian countries these persons would perhaps faintly realise the great Person who gives to Christendom its name and meaning. But it is their genuine conviction that without His

divine presence and power these Christian results would still have been achieved. How are we to regard these persons? They are the most astonishing witnesses to the widespread and far-reaching power of Christ. He brings into His service multitudes who do not know that they are serving His ends.

And most remarkable of all, we have throughout Christendom (not elsewhere) a socialist movement. The socialist takes the commandment, *Go thou and do likewise.* He isolates it from its Christian context. He does not necessarily put it into practice himself. But he uses it as a lash for Christians. Socialism, full of bitter denunciations of Christ and Christianity, does not often observe that unless it might presuppose a Christian society it would have no soil to work in it at all. Its denunciations of Capital and Capitalists, of Churches and of ministers, derive all their effect from the assumption that Christ's great law, *Go and do likewise*, is valid and is tacitly admitted. Socialism has to borrow its major premiss from Christ, and when Christ is ignored it finds some difficulty in working from the major and the minor to the conclusion.

It is only when we observe how our Lord's influence tells even where He is ignored and denied, that we form some conception of what the influence is.

A thousand agencies of beneficence are at work in our society as a direct result of His commandment; multitudes of busy toilers are redeemed from selfishness and kept in a patient ministry to the needs of others by the constant recollection of His will, and the mystical thought that what they do for men they are doing for their Lord. But even the agencies of good which do not acknowledge His name—medicine, nursing, hospitals, the honest service of members of Parliament, county councillors, vestrymen, town-councillors, guardians of the poor, the directors of orphanages, schools, and benevolent institutions generally—are seen to be due to Him by the fact that in Mohammedan and heathen societies these things are introduced by Christian influences or do not exist at all.

Again, we are stricken with wonder and awe in watching that simple interview between Jesus and a certain lawyer who stood up to tempt Him. From causes apparently trifling come the greatest results. *Go thou and do likewise.* We are conscious as we handle the words that they have lost nothing of their impulse and power. Conscience is awakened; neglect is rebuked; languid service is quickened; faithful service is exultant. The Son of God has put the divine seal on all deeds of lowly and loving service; He has called every one to engage, accord-

ing to opportunity and ability, in the ministry to suffering mankind; He has announced a Judgment, a supreme appeal at the last, and He has laid down the principle on which the decision is to turn. It is: *Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, even these least, ye did it unto me. Inasmuch as ye did it not unto one of these least, ye did it not unto me.*

CHAPTER XV

THE MAMMON OF UNRIGHTEOUSNESS

Luke xvi. 11.

"HAVE you ever observed," says Mr. Ruskin, "that all Christ's main teachings, by direct order, by earnest parable, and by His own permanent emotion, regard the use and misuse of *money?* . . . He acknowledges no love in buyers and sellers in His house. One should have thought there were people in that house twenty times worse than they, Caiaphas and his like, false priests, false prayer-makers, false leaders of the people, who needed putting to silence or to flight with darkest wrath. But the scourge is only against the *traffickers and thieves.* The two most intense of all the parables, the two which lead the rest in love and terror (this of the Prodigal and of Dives) relate both of them to management of riches. The practical order given to the only seeker of advice, of whom it is recorded that Christ 'loved

him,' is briefly about his property: *Sell that thou hast!*"*

Perhaps there is a little one-sided vehemence in this statement. Our Lord uses money and money relations more than once in order to illustrate His teaching, because money and money relations form a very large part of our practical life. But His teaching on the direct subject is sparse; for example, He says nothing about the acquisition of money, except the general command: *Take heed and beware of covetousness.* His directions refer to the use of money in spending. And His mode of regarding it has to be determined chiefly by this remarkable designation, *the Mammon of unrighteousness.*

His whole teaching is against the tendency to make money an end in itself. His law of love, and the Golden Rule, must prevent any man from making money unfairly. Unscrupulous competition or direct fraud must be out of the question for a son of the kingdom. It is not therefore the production, as economists would say, so much as the distribution of wealth which becomes a subject of regulation. He will assume that wealth is made, and that some have ten talents, some five, and some one. There are rich men and poor men; there are all conceivable varieties. Jesus manifests no interest in the ques-

* *Time and Tide*, § 174.

tion how much a man possesses; a man's life does not consist in that. He takes it for granted that money has been earned, and earned properly. He does not even consider the question of money stolen or obtained by injuring our brother. Money of that kind must remain filthy lucre, essentially unclean. But given the money which is obtained in the ordinary and serviceable ways, the symbols or tokens which represent the amount of realised labour or service which each man can claim as his own, the point on which Jesus lays down definite directions is, What shall you do with it? How shall you spend it?

But the first thing is to notice the term by which He designates money. He calls it the *Mammon of unrighteousness*. One might be tempted to think that the term implies a censure on the mode of obtaining the money. But there is not a trace of such an implication. The antithesis (see Luke xvi. 11) is not between money justly and money unjustly earned, but between money as such and the *true riches*, which is of course the heavenly treasure referred to in Matt. vi. 19, &c. If a man has not been faithful in the use of money, how can he obtain the true personal possessions of character and goodness which, in the eyes of Jesus, constitute riches? That is the question involved in this passage of St.

Luke, and we are bound therefore to recognise that Mammon is not in itself indifferent, and determined only in a bad sense by the adjectival clause "of unrighteousness." No, there is not a righteous Mammon and an unrighteous Mammon. Mammon as such carries a *constans epitheton*. Mammon as such is the Mammon of unrighteousness. The thought of Jesus, sane and simple as it is, departs so far from our current conceptions that one has to grasp it firmly. Money, however well and fairly earned, has a certain taint upon it. There is a snare in it, a mystery of iniquity, a spirit in it which excites madness. Virgil in a memorable line spoke of the *auri sacra fames*, the accursed hunger for gold. That hits the demonic element in Mammon. Money is the alluring symbol of possessions, of pleasure, of power, of importance. It stands for *this world*, as it can be claimed and manipulated by an individual, and be made the instrument of sovereignty. Deep inlaid in it is the lust of the world. The mystery of iniquity attaches to it precisely because it is a symbol, and gives to the itching fingers that clutch it a sense of indefinable power. It appears the simplest and most innocent of things; and if a man is indifferent to it, it is harmless. But let there be the least secret yearning towards it, let it enter the soul and obtain influence

there, and it will work all imaginable ruin. "The love of money is a root of all kinds of evil."

There is a famous story told by Chaucer of three brothers who wished to face "the shadow feared of man"—Death. An old man pointed to a path in the wood where they would meet him. Presently the path brought them to a bright pile of golden coins. This, though they knew it not, was death. It was agreed that two should mount guard while the third went to the town to procure the means of conveying the treasure away. When they were parted, the two considered that if they made away with their brother there would only be two to share the gold. Meanwhile the third brother reflected that if he could despatch the two the whole hoard would be his. He therefore brought back his brothers a poisoned bottle of wine. On his return the two fell upon him and killed him, and then they fed on the food he had brought, drank the poison, and died. That is a parable of Mammon. Money works in the world on just such lines. It parts friends. It is a subtle conspirator against love. It defiles in its production the face of Nature, and in its distribution poisons joy. There is no vulgarity like that of moneymaking and estimating men by money. It instigates to injustice and murder. All the finer feelings vanish from the soul that is consumed by this accursed

him,' is briefly about his property: *Sell that thou hast!*"*

Perhaps there is a little one-sided vehemence in this statement. Our Lord uses money and money relations more than once in order to illustrate His teaching, because money and money relations form a very large part of our practical life. But His teaching on the direct subject is sparse; for example, He says nothing about the acquisition of money, except the general command: *Take heed and beware of covetousness.* His directions refer to the use of money in spending. And His mode of regarding it has to be determined chiefly by this remarkable designation, *the Mammon of unrighteousness.*

His whole teaching is against the tendency to make money an end in itself. His law of love, and the Golden Rule, must prevent any man from making money unfairly. Unscrupulous competition or direct fraud must be out of the question for a son of the kingdom. It is not therefore the production, as economists would say, so much as the distribution of wealth which becomes a subject of regulation. He will assume that wealth is made, and that some have ten talents, some five, and some one. There are rich men and poor men; there are all conceivable varieties. Jesus manifests no interest in the ques-

* *Time and Tide*, § 174.

tion how much a man possesses; a man's life does not consist in that. He takes it for granted that money has been earned, and earned properly. He does not even consider the question of money stolen or obtained by injuring our brother. Money of that kind must remain filthy lucre, essentially unclean. But given the money which is obtained in the ordinary and serviceable ways, the symbols or tokens which represent the amount of realised labour or service which each man can claim as his own, the point on which Jesus lays down definite directions is, What shall you do with it? How shall you spend it?

But the first thing is to notice the term by which He designates money. He calls it the *Mammon of unrighteousness*. One might be tempted to think that the term implies a censure on the mode of obtaining the money. But there is not a trace of such an implication. The antithesis (see Luke xvi. 11) is not between money justly and money unjustly earned, but between money as such and the *true riches*, which is of course the heavenly treasure referred to in Matt. vi. 19, &c. If a man has not been faithful in the use of money, how can he obtain the true personal possessions of character and goodness which, in the eyes of Jesus, constitute riches? That is the question involved in this passage of St.

Luke, and we are bound therefore to recognise that Mammon is not in itself indifferent, and determined only in a bad sense by the adjectival clause "of unrighteousness." No, there is not a righteous Mammon and an unrighteous Mammon. Mammon as such carries a *constans epitheton*. Mammon as such is the Mammon of unrighteousness. The thought of Jesus, sane and simple as it is, departs so far from our current conceptions that one has to grasp it firmly. Money, however well and fairly earned, has a certain taint upon it. There is a snare in it, a mystery of iniquity, a spirit in it which excites madness. Virgil in a memorable line spoke of the *auri sacra fames*, the accursed hunger for gold. That hits the demonic element in Mammon. Money is the alluring symbol of possessions, of pleasure, of power, of importance. It stands for *this world*, as it can be claimed and manipulated by an individual, and be made the instrument of sovereignty. Deep inlaid in it is the lust of the world. The mystery of iniquity attaches to it precisely because it is a symbol, and gives to the itching fingers that clutch it a sense of indefinable power. It appears the simplest and most innocent of things; and if a man is indifferent to it, it is harmless. But let there be the least secret yearning towards it, let it enter the soul and obtain influence

there, and it will work all imaginable ruin. "The love of money is a root of all kinds of evil."

There is a famous story told by Chaucer of three brothers who wished to face "the shadow feared of man"—Death. An old man pointed to a path in the wood where they would meet him. Presently the path brought them to a bright pile of golden coins. This, though they knew it not, was death. It was agreed that two should mount guard while the third went to the town to procure the means of conveying the treasure away. When they were parted, the two considered that if they made away with their brother there would only be two to share the gold. Meanwhile the third brother reflected that if he could despatch the two the whole hoard would be his. He therefore brought back his brothers a poisoned bottle of wine. On his return the two fell upon him and killed him, and then they fed on the food he had brought, drank the poison, and died. That is a parable of Mammon. Money works in the world on just such lines. It parts friends. It is a subtle conspirator against love. It defiles in its production the face of Nature, and in its distribution poisons joy. There is no vulgarity like that of moneymaking and estimating men by money. It instigates to injustice and murder. All the finer feelings vanish from the soul that is consumed by this accursed

hunger. In the rush for a goldfield the selfishness of unredeemed human nature is revealed. And in those unhappy times when new goldfields are opened up, crowds of men rush to the goldfield, and the coarseness and the ill savour of it all spread through the plague-smitten community. It is for reasons of this kind that Jesus calls money *the Mammon of unrighteousness*. In this striking phrase He gives a history of money, and sums up its moral results. Mammon is a perfectly heartless tyrant, as Watts has painted him, with the wings which indicate his uncertain crown, with his foot on a prostrate maiden and his metal hand on the crushed head of a youth. How seductive and blinding money is may be estimated by the effect of that noble picture itself upon the British public. It has stood, by the prophetic generosity of the painter, before the eyes of all for many years. No one disputes its correctness. And yet it is in these years that the fierce fight for wealth has become more intense, and that the worship of Mammon has assumed the dimensions of a national cult.

Looking, as that great master and teacher has done, upon the ill deeds of Mammon—the crushed lives, the broken hearts, the ruined literature, the blighted country, the vulgarised world, the insensibility to religion, the unseemly scramble for con-

tinents, the deterioration of native races, the hypocritical permission of slavery, the prostituted marriages, the convict establishments and prisons, the wide havoc of company-promotion, the decent men with their hands besmeared by bribes—one can easily acquire an almost irrational terror of the very metals which can thus transform men into fiends, and desecrate the whole of human life. It is easy to understand and to sympathise with teachers like St. Francis, who fall far short of our Lord's fine balance, seeing salvation in a voluntary poverty and in the refusal to handle the coins which produce such pernicious effects.

But He is not carried away into this extravagance. The Pharisees, we are told, were covetous; the Ebionites, like the Franciscans, based religion on poverty. But Jesus stood equally removed from these extremes. He might call upon a particular person whose besetting sin was a secret love of money to part with it and give it to the poor; but it was far from His serenity of wisdom to make the renunciation of money, as such, a religious act. The Orders in the Roman Church which have laid down this principle of poverty cannot point to one word of His to justify them. They cannot even cite His own example; for the little company of His Disciples had their bag, though it is true that he who carried

it became demoralised. Jesus sanctioned the use of Mammon, but it justified its designation Mammon of unrighteousness by its effect on His own disciple, Judas.

We must not pause to go into all the thoughts which might be deduced from this way of regarding wealth—a way which Jesus may claim as peculiarly His own. But we may notice what an answer there is to those who stigmatise Christianity as unpractical and inconsistent with the conditions of earthly life. The Monastic idea is unpractical enough, a fruitful source of abuses. The enormous number of the "religious" drawn aside into the several Orders in Spain is pointed out as one of the causes of the ruin of that noble country. And when England at the time of the Reformation indignantly broke up these useless and demoralising establishments, she started at once on a career of prosperity and of genuine charity which has brought her to the forefront of the peoples. But the Monastic idea, the Monastic practice, is not Christian. It is Ebionite and Buddhist. Intrinsically it is anti-Christian. It is the precise reversal of Christ's thought for His Disciples that they should be in the world and yet not of the world. The Monastic Orders are, as McCabe's curious book, *Twelve Years in a Monastery*, shows, out of the world and yet of the world.

Monastic Orders begin with a vow of poverty, and end by sucking in the wealth of the community, leaving the unhappy country on which they batten, like Spain, exhausted and demoralised.

It is necessary, therefore, to disentangle Christianity, and the commandment of Jesus, from those extravagances into which the Church, under an evil star, has run. Notwithstanding the severe warning which is conveyed in the designation of money as Mammon of unrighteousness, Jesus does not denounce wealth as such. If money, or the love of it, actually is a root of all kinds of evil, money, though not the love it, may become a root of many kinds of good. There is a right use of money—only one. If that right use can be understood, the very character of money may be changed. Though the Mammon of unrighteousness could not become the Mammon of righteousness—that would be a contradiction in terms—money may cease to be Mammon altogether and become a flexible instrument in the free action of God. And in this way, though you cannot serve God and Mammon, you may with Mammon serve God, or rather in using Mammon to serve God, you rob it of its bad name.

Jesus therefore frankly accepts money as one of the inevitable conditions of human life. Wealth will be made; wealth will accumulate. In the

natural order of things one man by talent or industry will have more than another; and many men by natural incapacity or misfortune will miss their share of it altogether. The poor you will always have with you. The socialistic theory is only a leaden rule which suggests a standard and encourages society to come nearer to it. As an absolute principle it can never be realised in a world like this. The differences are intrinsic in a realm of human freedom. It is a curious vagary of thought to represent Jesus as a socialist. That is just what He is not. The socialist thinks everything of material wealth and wellbeing. Jesus thinks nothing of it. The socialist detests any reference to the eternal habitations, believing that that is a device to put off the poor from grasping their share of earthly goods. Jesus, on the contrary, sees no meaning in earthly property until it is lit up by the light of the eternal habitations. The socialist demands not charity but justice, not observing that justice might demand a wholesale elimination of the bad, the useless, the unsocial individuals. Jesus sees in charity the only feasible justice for our infirm human life.

Accordingly Jesus, instead of exciting the cupidity of the poor by pointing to the possessions of the rich, touches the springs of compassion in the rich by pointing to the sufferings of the poor. Or rather—

for this only half expresses His unexpected point of view—without touching on the question of rich and poor, He teaches that money, whether possessed in great or small quantities, has only one legitimate use. It must be employed in reference to eternal habitations. It must be so spent or given as to win the love of those who may receive us into those habitations. In a word, money is to be treated as a means to securing the treasures in heaven which fail not. Money is itself transitory and uncertain. In the eternal world it has absolutely no significance at all. But, while we are here, and when we possess any of it, it is capable of being exchanged into the currency of heaven. It cannot purchase the gifts of God. *Thy money perish with thee*, cried the indignant Apostle, *because thou thoughtest to obtain the gift of God with money.* There is something childish in the notion that money paid to priests for the purchase of masses can secure the heavenly possession for ourselves or others. But the right use of the Mammon of unrighteousness is capable of enlisting the sympathies and affections of spiritual beings, and in that way of preparing a company who will welcome us on the far shore, when the transit from this life to another is accomplished.

The startling and abrupt form in which Jesus proclaims this truth is more effectual than a laboured

treatise or the most detailed exposition. Everything is said in a sentence: *Make to yourselves friends by means of the Mammon of unrighteousness, that when it shall fail, they may receive you into the eternal tabernacles.* But while everything is said in a sentence, the sentence unfolds in reflection and in experience, to become a complete philosophy of the use of money.

We may observe that the parable of the pounds in Luke xix. 12, &c., is supposed by some to have once stood between v. 9. and v. 10 of ch. xvi. This arrangement admirably accounts for the thought in v. 10: *He that is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much.* It also sheds a new light on the precept itself. The diligent use of the pounds in trading, each man using what is entrusted to him, more or less, is, rightly understood, one of the ways in which the Mammon of unrighteousness can be used in making friends.

We may now grapple with the doctrine of Jesus, that THE ONE RIGHT USE OF MONEY IS TO SO EMPLOY IT THAT WE FORM AROUND US A SPIRITUAL KINSHIP, A LASTING SOCIETY OF FRIENDS AND SYMPATHISERS IN THE ETERNAL WORLD.

To use money for accumulation is folly. In the Eastern tale the golden sequins stored in the chests were found to be dry autumnal leaves when the

chests were opened. There is no certainty or stability in money saved; moth and rust in a hundred ways consume, and thieves break through and steal. To use money for purposes of self-indulgence is even more misguided, as the striking parable of the rich man lifting up his eyes in torment shows. To use money for purposes of entertainment and giving enjoyment to friends, who may ask you again, comes nearer, though not near enough, to the thought of Jesus. Indeed, there is something highly significant in the amount of admiration and affection which a rich man may win by a very moderate degree of unselfish expenditure. He keeps up a sumptuous establishment and entertains liberally. He is master of the hounds. He gives generously to charities, and is always ready to show a kindness to his servants, or even to strangers. And every one treats him with more than the show of respect. Society recognises him; those who are outside of the charmed circle envy him, and the poor regard him with astonishing good-will. But expenditure of this kind, the overflow of altruism from an exuberant and prosperous egotism, by no means necessarily provides friends to welcome one in eternal habitations. So far from this, if it should happen that the money should be exhausted, it is a chance if one of the friends would receive the unfortunate man into

his earthly habitation. When the young Virginian, Mr. Warrington, finds himself in the sponging-house, he supposes it is only a question of deciding which of his friends shall have the honour of releasing him. But he discovers to his dismay that the men who had received his splendid entertainments, welcomed him into their society, and won his money at cards, are none of them disposed to help him out of his predicament. And so the Persian story tells of a Prince who, to test his followers, came into the great hall dressed as a common person. He found himself jostled, and twitted, and treated with scant courtesy by his obsequious courtiers. Then he withdrew and clad himself in the royal robes, and as the men who had just contemned him came bowing before him, he suggested to them that they should bow to his dress, and invoke "My lord coat," as it was evidently the dress and not the man that won their respect. The friends who are won by the display of wealth are the friends of the wealth rather than of the man; and for this reason we cannot identify this use of money with that which Jesus had in His mind.

But it is possible consistently to use money with a view to the good of our fellow men. We may regard ourselves as stewards; and the one object, whether in business or in giving, may be to benefit

others. We may take into account that we and our fellows are all moving rapidly enough into the eternal world, and it is therefore our duty to make all our earthly goods subservient to the eternal good. When this is the master-thought in the use of our money, the idea of Jesus will be realised, and we shall, by its use, make friends of the kind that can receive us into heaven.

The most obvious application of the principle is in giving. Thus St. Paul charges the rich to be willing to give, "laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on the life which is life indeed."* Money can relieve distress; it can procure health and convalescence for the sick; it can educate the ignorant; it can start young people in life, and can rescue the old from degradation and despondency; it can even work directly for the salvation of souls by disseminating the Bible, or by establishing churches, or by sending missionaries to the heathen. If I may quote again from an article mentioned in a previous chapter: "Dr. Morrison, 'The Australian in China,'—not a missionary, but an entertaining traveller—reports that in one year 3717 Chinese converts cost about £350,000, rather less than £100 apiece; and he seems to think them dear at the price.

* 1 Tim. vi. 19.

I take a different view. If the missionaries made no converts for ten years I should consider the two or three thousand of them scattered over this vast empire to be doing work well worth the paltry cost. So long as they remain the sole agents of civilisation to befriend the poor and the sick, standing by them in time of epidemics, flood, drought and famine, and putting to shame their horrible superstition, the money is well spent."*

We may evidently infer from the words of Jesus that gratitude for services done in this life survives the grave, and when we have left behind our useless money at death, the only form in which we can take it into the other world is in the gratitude and love of those whom we have benefited. And it is a moving thought to picture to oneself a good man, who has been a systematic and generous giver, welcomed at the entrance of the spiritual world by souls that with purged eyes now crowd around to express their devotion to their benefactor. One of very moderate means can, if his heart is set upon it, accomplish a vast amount of good. He may be received by those whose hearts he relieved from pressing anxiety, and those whom he started on a successful and useful career; he may find many whom he helped to

* Special Correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph* on "China Past and Present." June 25, 1898.

educate by his generosity, and many whom, indirectly, he helped to save. These shall come from the south and the north, and these from the land of Sinim. He may find a heartfelt greeting from many whom he had never seen, those who owe their entrance into the kingdom of heaven to his self-denying gifts. And it is easy to imagine that of all the benefactions which will receive this kind of reward in the future, none will be the subject of such profound gratitude as those which have gone to the support of foreign missions. It is a large and compassionate love which realises the sufferings, temporal and spiritual, of men on the other side of the world. And in proportion as the heathen may conceive themselves to have been naturally shut off from the notice and help of Christendom, will be their warm and lasting recognition of those who sent to them the word of life, and brought them to Christ.

It does not appear that charitable bequests, left at death, can answer the same purpose. They may, it is true, accomplish the same good; but it is not possible for those who are benefited by them to have any of the direct and lively gratitude which would welcome the benefactor into the eternal habitations. Bequests and legacies represent money left behind which cannot be taken away. If a man

has kept it while he could, we cannot feel any great admiration if he surrenders it when he can no longer keep it. For many years the present writer saw daily the words emblazoned on the window of the college chapel, "Pray for the soul of William of Wykeham, the founder of this college." That appeal for the prayers of pious scholars and Fellows, continued now for over five hundred years, had a curious effect on the mind. Were all his benefactions, then, simply a payment for continual masses for his soul? And if the poor soul requires the bribed prayers of the generations, what kind of a soul was it, and what kind of a God did it believe in, or what kind of eternal habitations were those which it sought? Posthumous gifts must renounce the reward which Jesus held out to those who rightly use the Mammon of unrighteousness. And the vanished soul making its bid for prayers must look for other hands to receive it in heaven than those who have received its not disinterested gifts.

But while the first thought in connection with this use of Mammon is giving, it would be a great mistake to limit the Lord's thought to that one channel. Money may be used, not in the way of giving, still with the dominant thought of blessing men, and so, remotely, with the result of securing the welcome beyond.

In what is called the investment of money, *i.e.*, the employment of money in some industry, and also in the kind of expenditure to which money is devoted, it is possible to redeem the Mammon of unrighteousness and turn it into an instrument of good. It will repay us to glance for a moment along each of these two familiar directions. And as so large a part of life consists and must consist of the employment of money in one or other of these two ways, it is peculiarly important to vindicate the authority of our Lord's commandment in these spheres.

We must not branch off into Political Economy; but Christ has His claim even there.

1. Economists have no difficulty in showing that while the expenditure of the prodigal is socially injurious, the right investment of money in useful industry is a great service to the community. A man is a benefactor who opens up a new field of useful industry, partly because he supplies commodities, and partly because he employs labour. If his real aim is to supply commodities and to employ labour, and not merely to promote his own interests and to accumulate wealth, his business operations will speedily be recognised as a service for which all concerned have to be grateful. As the object is not to make money, he will continue his

manufacturing or his other business even without profits, considering that ultimately the community must recognise the utility of what he will supply. And as people realise the benefit, they will be proportionately grateful to him for his disinterested perseverance. And as in all his relations with employés he thinks primarily of their welfare, he will often retain them in his employment when he could do without them, from a feeling that it is better to help his fellow men than to reap large personal gains. A captain of industry who works in this spirit—and such men have never been wanting in modern England, and they might become far more numerous if we recognised more clearly the ethical and Christian sanction of their conduct—is a great benefactor. The numerous workers who benefit by his enterprise, and the public who consume his products, will probably cherish the warmest regard to him. And in a true sense the Mammon of unrighteousness so employed will have provided him friends to receive him into everlasting habitations.

Every one can see how the Lord's commandment is fulfilled when subscriptions and donations are given to Christian work. But it is equally important to recognise how a merchant, a business man, a tradesman, a trafficker, may in all these departments of enterprise, with a true obedience to the Master,

be no less realising His use of money than a philanthropist. It is because this application of Christ's teaching has not been made to the ordinary proceedings of business that business has become so unchristian, even when it is carried on by men who, in the specifically religious departments of their life, are sincerely Christian. The time therefore has certainly come when every business man should write over his office, "Make to yourselves friends of the Mammon of unrighteousness," and should cease to think that it is possible to compound with conscience for sins in business by generous ransom money in philanthropy. A great company-promoter gives golden plate to St. Paul's, and makes to himself friends by lavish bribes to his directors. In the end the method is ruinous both to business and to religion. What was wanted was that each company should be formed in obedience to the Lord's commandment, on such lines that it would be a real benefit to all who were concerned; and then it would not have been necessary to bribe directors with indefinite sums or to bribe the Church with golden plate. The friends made would have been of a different kind, and they might have received him into eternal habitations.

2. But even in the matter of ordinary expenditure the pregnant principle of Jesus comes in and works

in many ways, if it is allowed to rest in the conscience and to germinate there. Idle, extravagant, and thoughtless expenditure is a fruitful source of mischief to the community. Expenditure on luxuries draws labour into the market of luxuries, than which nothing is more insecure. Lavish expenditure, without any regard to the details of exactness, encourages dishonesty and promotes that dangerous wish in human nature to get wealth without earning it which finds its worst expression in gambling. Again, to purchase bad workmanship or bad art, or things which are showy and cheap, is to spread streams of demoralisation through the community.

On the other hand, where expenditure is regulated by conscience, and where conscience is formed and moved by the commandments of Jesus, our use of money in every-day expenditure becomes a definite influence for good. It is as much our duty in this department of life, as in that of business or in that of philanthropy, to make friends who may receive us into eternal habitations. Everything has to be done with reference to that.

The makers of cheap and fraudulent goods will not in the end bless you for your patronage; they will recognise in it an aid to their ruin. The painters of intrinsically bad pictures will have no

gratitude to purchasers when they find how they have been seduced by an *ignis fatuus* from the paths of an honest industry. When we buy things that are made at the price of the bodies and souls of men or women; when we encourage tradesmen who make their profits by an unscrupulous sweating, or maintain their position by a pitiless war of underselling waged against competitors; or when by thoughtlessness and essential irreligion we promote in any way the bad practices, frauds, and demoralisation of society—we are throwing away that instrument which ought to be employed for making friends in the eternal world, and we are justifying the bad, true designation of money, as Mammon of unrighteousness.

"For money is a strange seed: scattered, it is poison; but set, it is bread: so that a man whom God has appointed to be a sower must bear as lightly as he may the burden of gold and of possessions, till he find the proper places to sow them in."*

* Ruskin. *Fors Clavigera*, lxii.

CHAPTER XVI

WATCH

THERE is no commandment of Jesus which seems to be more frequently on His lips than this: *Watch.* If the reader will be at the pains to read the following passages in succession: Luke xxi. 34–36; Mark xiii. 33–37; Luke xii. 35–40; Luke xxi. 8; Matt. xxvi. 36; Mark xiv. 37, 38; Matt. xxiv. 42; Matt. xxv. 1–13;*—he will be sufficiently impressed with the insistence which the Master lays upon this difficult duty.

On one occasion the command took the form: *Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.*† In the other instances it applies to that Parousia which He foretold as a certain though indefinite fact.

The prophets Ezekiel, Jeremiah, Isaiah, and

* This catena is given in Elliot Stock's valuable little book, *The Master's Guide for His Disciples*, p. 50.

† Mark xiv. 37, 38.

Habakkuk gave another turn to the necessity of watching by dwelling on the watchmen who are set to warn and to save souls. Christian ministers, in the Epistle to the Hebrews (xiii. 17), are described as watching as they that shall give account. But it does not appear that the Lord Himself used the term in this sense; we may here, therefore, set it aside.

But such a warning as He gave to Simon and the Disciples in the garden reveals Him as filled with a genuine anxiety for *His own*. He was more conscious than we are of the dangers which beset the Christian's life. He saw the enemy sowing tares among the wheat, and the thief watching his opportunity of stealing the hid treasure. He was aware of the collusion which exists between the foe without and the soul within: *The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.* There is no temptation in this world which does not find in that treacherous "flesh" a too ready ear. Then, again, He knew that He would return. The day and the hour were hidden from Him, but He knew that He would come suddenly as a thief, and that He would expect His own to be watching for Him. He therefore depicted the permanent attitude of the Christian soul: *Be ye like unto men that wait for their Lord.*

Possibly the two applications of the command are

not so far apart as they seem ; but we will look at them separately. Employ that eye of the soul, Consideration, and you quickly become conscious why your Lord was anxious for you, more anxious than you are for yourself, in presence of the unceasing temptations of the world. Employ that other eye of the soul, Faith, and a great light is shed upon the meaning of the Parousia, and you understand in what sense He bade us watch lest the day should come upon us unawares. *Watch* is the commandment. Fulfil it, and it serves many unforeseen applications.

1. *Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation.* Jesus always recognises that the *world* is unfavourable for a true spiritual development. The soil, on the whole, will not receive and nourish the seed. The world's treatment of the Master is an indication of its attitude towards His disciples. He is so convinced of this that sometimes a note of pessimism occurs in His thought, which is in the long run absolutely optimistic. *When the Son of Man comes, shall He find faith on the earth?* We shrink from allowing the existence of personal agencies of evil which work deliberately against righteousness and the spiritual life. But the literal correctness of the word of Jesus establishes itself.

Every religious institution tends rapidly towards

decay; and unless it is carefully watched like a neglected building it falls into ruins and its charm is no longer in the architectural beauty of utility and order, but only in the clinging ivy and the picturesque outlines of the crumbling stones. The Syrian, Armenian, Nestorian, Abyssinian, and Coptic Churches furnish undisputed examples of the tendency in even the religion of Christ to become corrupt and unrecognisable. Many of us think that the Orthodox and the Roman Churches are examples quite as striking, though not so indisputable. And when a Church sanctifies its decays, and authorises its errors by a dogma of infallibility, it becomes not only decayed, but an active principle of decay in every society where it is admitted.

Creeds also, however verbally and rationally correct, fall into a desuetude, and cumber the ground like rusty machinery. Nothing has happened to them except that, not being watched and used, they have undergone the fate which awaits all spiritual expressions in an unspiritual world. Our own personal life shows the same tendency to succumb to the unfavourable environment. Unless we watch, worship becomes a routine, private prayer vain repetition, the Bible loses its savour, and Christian work becomes merely mechanical.

All these familiar facts are only explained by

recognising the literal truth of the warning of Christ and His Apostles. Truth and righteousness wrestle with invisible principles of evil. As the microbes of disease are in the air, and fasten eagerly on any organism which by weakness affords them an opportunity, so there are microbes of spiritual disease and death which will assail not only those who go out with the set resolution to sin, but those who remain at home in apathy, not guarding against the assault. Unless we watch we are overcome by mere indolence and unconcern.

There is also a plea for watchfulness in a fact on which the late Dr. Dale used to lay stress. The forces of spiritual evil are sufficiently intelligent to adapt themselves to our changing age and moods. Evils which tempt us at twenty may have ceased to affect us at forty; but at forty there are temptations which we never felt at twenty. And this accounts for the pathetic spectacle of one who has watched carefully against a foe in front and continues the vigilance in that direction, while another foe steals in unobserved and masters him from the rear. In youth our enthusiasm and audacity will give the enemy a chance; in old age his chance will be found in a world-wearied listlessness and suspicion of any improvement.

It is appalling, for instance, to observe how our

chief enemy, Pride, can renew his attacks with inexhaustible resources. You shall overthrow him in a fair open conflict, and he shall slip from his armour, appear at your side congratulating you on your victory, and attain a more decided influence over you than ever. Each age and almost each year brings a new development of the endless conflict. Sin changes its forms like Proteus, its colours like the chameleon. One who is to overcome can never afford to relax his vigilance, can never be too suspicious of the first approaches of sin. For we take the cunning bosom-sin to our home like the cub of a tiger, which is innocent and playful as a kitten, with the intention of dismissing it when it becomes dangerous. But the danger develops unannounced; without warning the whelp is full grown, and in apparent play he turns to rend us.

Watch! the word rings out like a solemn warning. You are within the enemy's lines, and, worse still, the enemy in collusion is within the gates of your own camp. An unwary step, an indulgent relaxation, the neglect to pray, to meditate, to wrestle, may ruin even a hardy soldier of the Cross. In such reflections there is a terror which may paralyse us. And unless we find that He has some enabling power as well as the bare command, we are apt to give up the task in despair. The soul in

the monastery cell sighs over its ceaseless conflict, and the voices of the air taunt it with its impotence.

> Christian, dost thou hear them,
> How they speak thee fair,
> "Always fast and vigil,
> Always watch and prayer?"

Whence does the help come? An *Imitatio Christi* writes itself. Jesus appears as the companion and supporter of the conflict. But there is something even more than this. Jesus appears as the vicarious watchman, whose vigilance is the security when His followers fail. They are heavy with sleep, they cannot watch one hour with Him; but He withdraws, and wrestles and prays for them. "I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not" is more effectual even than the reproach, *Simon, sleepest thou? couldst thou not watch with me one hour?* It is the vigilance of Jesus for us which, if anything, will make us vigilant. It is the appeal of that vicarious toil for us which makes us His own. There is a story told of Napoleon that, one night patrolling the camp, he found a young sentry asleep at his post. He took the musket from the nerveless hand, and kept the watch himself. In the cold grey of the morning the soldier saw his general pacing backwards and forwards in his place. It is some such appeal as this that our Lord makes to our

sleepy souls. The watching against sin and temptation would be an intolerable strain, but that He has the power of watching for us, and engaging our attention with His own person. The whole commandment changes its bearing in the light of this mystical fact. While St. Antony retires to the desert to watch against sin, he probably keeps his eye on the sin he watches against; the alluring forms intensify the struggle, and leave the erroneous impression that victory is impossible except for some ascetic strength and virtue like the saint's. But when the Christian preoccupies his mind with the person and the word of Jesus, the vigilance which is needed to apprehend Him is maintained by the vigilance of Jesus in apprehending the Christian; and the vigilance which is thus secured in the apprehension of Jesus becomes the protection against the spiritual forces of sin and temptation.

Perhaps we may put it in a picturesque form. Jesus comes, as in the remarkable story of Olive Schreiner's, and keeps the watch at the camp fire with trooper Peter Halket. It is His own power and charm that keep the eyes waking: the desire of His person summons us to early and frequent prayer, and the realisation of His presence becomes a safeguard against those powers of evil which

in their invisible omnipresence seemed too much for us.

2. But as we are thus led to find the discharge of His commandment to watch against sin in a preoccupation with His personal presence as our vicarious Redeemer, we discover a close connection between this application of the command to watch and the one which in His lips is far more frequent.

He bids us watch for what He calls His *Parousia*.* The Parousia is compared to the coming of the bridegroom at a midnight marriage, or to the return of a master from a long journey. The word in this special sense echoes through the New Testament: it occurs fourteen times outside of the Gospels.† We have adopted the word into our language because there is no precise English equivalent. It means primarily, *a being present*, and secondarily, a *presence* which results from coming, *i.e.*, an arrival. The natural meaning is illustrated in 1 Cor. xvi. 17. "And I rejoice in the coming (*marg.* presence) of Stephanas," &c. Naturally presence which results from coming is more frequently the subject of remark.‡ But one example, "His bodily presence,"

* Matt. xxiv. 3, 27, 37, 39.

† 1 Cor. i. 8; xv. 23. 1 Thess. ii. 19; iii. 13; iv. 15; v. 23. 2 Thess. ii. 1, 8. James v. 7, 8. 2 Peter i. 16; iii. 4, 12. 1 John ii. 28.

‡ 2 Cor. vii. 6, 7.

in 2 Cor. x. 10, shows clearly that the presence and not the coming is the essence of the word.*

Now, if the reader will carefully consider the places in Matt. xxiv. where our Lord speaks of His Parousia, and then combine them with those chapters in St. John where the theme of the Comforter is developed, he may see reason to believe that the word Parousia is to be understood rather as presence than as coming. The figurative form, and the parables employed in illustration, may give the impression that His thought is only of a coming, what we call, rather oddly, His second coming. But the underlying idea in His own mind is that of a presence, which manifests itself, but may easily be missed by the unprepared.

We cannot be surprised that in the circle of the Apostles, where the Second Advent was immediately expected, great stress should have been laid on it as a motive for vigilance. But the comparison of 2 Thess. with 1 Thess. shows that even in the lifetime of St. Paul the misunderstanding, that the Second Coming would be within that generation, was corrected. The latest stratum of the New Testament literature is concerned to show that the coming was not an immediate event.† And it is

* *Cf.* Phil. i. 26; ii. 12.

† 2 Peter, iii. 4. Professor Ramsay dates this epistle in 100–120 A.D. *The Church in the Roman Empire*, p. 432.

evident that so soon as it became clear that the Advent was not to be expected in that generation—the words of the Lord had been misunderstood—that Advent, now indefinitely removed, since one day may mean a thousand years, no longer supplied a very pressing reason for vigilance. We are so constituted that an expected event, always postponed, simply produces a certain callousness of feeling with respect to it. No people are more reckless than they who live on the slopes of a volcano, which may at any moment overwhelm them with fiery ruin. Nowhere has debauchery reached a greater height than in cities smitten by the plague, where each day's escape seems to indicate a fated immunity. Soldiers who have taken their lives in their hand become perfectly cool under impending danger. Lieut. Henderson, for example, captured by the Sofas on the West Coast of Africa, heard his captors discussing by what method they should put him to death. He observed to them that he was tired and would sleep until they had settled the point. Brave as it sounds, that is no uncommon mood for men who are living in the midst of alarms.

An expected Second Coming which does not occur century after century cannot by the nature of the case have any decisive effect on our moral or spiritual life. St. Augustine's "the day was kept in darkness

in order that every day should be observed alike" may pass as a theological ingenuity, but it shows a forgetfulness of obvious facts in human nature. If the postponed Advent is greatly desired, it will charge life with the heart-sickness of deferred hope; if it is dreaded, it will harden the conscience in the defiance of denial.

Be it observed, the author in pointing out this fact is not casting any discredit on the belief in the Second Coming. It is impossible to study our Lord's language, and to attach importance to it, without cherishing the belief that He will come again, in the same way that He disappeared from our midst. He must come to complete the redemption which He began and to judge the world which He saved. Christian hearts could ill afford to part with that primitive belief. Nothing else affords a probable solution of the mystery of the world's life. How else is the kingdom to come in its fulness? He will come again; the old weary order will be arrested; a new and better order will begin. The powers that disturb the peace of the world will be destroyed; they who have not learnt to love will be shrivelled up in the fire of His appearing. And the beautiful design which obviously slumbers as a dream and a promise in the mysterious facts of history, and even of the earth, will be realised in a kingdom wherein righteousness will dwell.

Watch the splendours of the sunset, when the kindling skies open in vistas of the Apocalypse; or be present at the austere rites of the dawn, when light returns to rescue the shadowed earth; and feed your heart on the thought that in some such way your Lord will come. Or,

> It may be when the midnight
> Is heavy upon the land,
> And the black waves lying dumbly
> Along the sand;
> When the moonless night draws close,
> And the lights are out in the house;
> When the fires burn low and red,
> And the watch is ticking loudly
> Beside the bed:
> Though you sleep, tired out on your couch,
> Still your heart must wake and watch
> In the dark room,
> For it may be that at midnight
> I will come.*

It is, then, with no intention of disparaging the hope of the Church, which has been from the beginning and cannot be surrendered to the end, that this obvious truth is pointed out: As a motive for watching, the Second Coming is neither theoretically nor practically sufficient to overcome our natural carelessness. But suppose now we venture to press the more primitive meaning of the word

* *Ezekiel and other Poems*, by B. M., p. 26.

Parousia. It signifies being present. It may refer therefore to the presence of Jesus with His people, which was promised in many forms during His life. Where two or three should be gathered in His name, there He would be present. When He was leaving the world He said that in the person of the Comforter He would return. As He poises Himself on that limit between the seen and the unseen, before vanishing out of sight, He declares: Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the age.* This last is the exact expression used in the inquiry:† "What shall be the sign of the Presence and of the end of the age?"

Granted that our Lord points always to a return, the hour of which is hidden even from Himself, is it not evident also that He promised a *Presence* which should begin from the time of His disappearance? And is it not this presence which excites our profound interest and furnishes the motives for watching? For it may well be that this Parousia being admittedly invisible and intangible, is of such a kind that, apart from watching, it will not be perceived. The heart gross with drunkenness and surfeit, or preoccupied and heavy with the cares and excitements of the world, may stare with blank eyes at the manifestation of Jesus and see nothing at all.

* Matt. xxviii. 20. † Matt. xxiv. 3.

There is a touching story of Lavater, that concluding from the last chapter of St. John that the beloved Disciple had not died, he used to peer into the face of every passer-by in the street, always expectant that he might detect the Apostle. Now possibly the meaning of our Lord's command to watch is illustrated by this story. The Parousia of the Son of Man will be so unexpected, so silent and unobtrusive, that unless the eyes of the spirit are vigilant it may not be observed. If this be His meaning we certainly have an astonishing motive for vigilance. We would see Jesus? His command is: *Watch, and what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch.*

In thus interpreting the Parousia as an actual fact of spiritual experience, it will be found that we have a remarkable light shed upon some difficult passages of Scripture. There is, *e.g.*, the word of St. Paul: "Let your moderation be known unto all men, the Lord is at hand."* If the motive for moderation, or sweet reasonableness of conduct, is sought in the Second Coming, these nineteen lagging centuries lie heavy upon us. But if the motive is found in the fact that the Lord is near, close by us, observing our conduct and hearing our words, that is a sufficiently vivid reason for treating one another with

* Phil. iv. 5.

consideration. We do not fly into passions before our Sovereign.

Or again, Scripture closes with the words: "He which testifieth these things saith, Yea: I come quickly. Amen: come, Lord Jesus." If that refers to the Second Coming only, the whole book is discredited by the delay. But if we may accept the meaning of the Parousia which we are now discussing, the *Yea: I come quickly*, was fulfilled from the beginning. The passionate response, *Amen: come, Lord Jesus*, was not met by the chill taciturnity of the ages and the postponement to other worlds and other times. He came: He comes. His Presence is a fact of experience which it is open to any of us to verify. And the condition of the verification is that we should be on the alert, that we should keep wakeful, that we should *watch*, because the nature of His manifestation is such that He is revealed only to waiting eyes.

It becomes a very sacred task to suggest in what ways the promise is fulfilled when the commandment is obeyed; and a careless reader may easily suppose that the words used are only metaphors. The writer must therefore protest beforehand that he is speaking in the most literal and prosaic sense.

1. There are direct revelations of His person which the Lord makes to those who look for His

appearing. Cowper referred to this when he wrote:

> Sometimes a light surprises
> The Christian while he sings:
> It is the Lord who rises
> With healing in His wings.

But we imagine in poetical expression a certain licence. Let us state the fact simply and baldly. You may go to your bed at night weary and oppressed, committing your soul to God in a kind of despairing resignation. You wake at the accustomed time of prayer, and a vision is in your soul. You rise up at once to pray. Prayer bubbles up like a fountain. As the familiar petitions and words fall from your lips, you become aware that you are not alone. Invisible beings seem about you. You proceed, and presently the prayer is a conscious communion with Another, and a dew seems to fall on your heart. The lust of the world dies. The joy of the Cross is sweeter than the fruits of Paradise. To the senses there is nothing. But to you, the real you, of which the senses are but the outer factors, the Parousia of Jesus is manifest.

There are many of His servants who have repeated the experience of those Disciples on the lake. They have toiled all night and taken nothing. And then an inward voice bids fling the net on this side

of the ship. Immediately there is a haul, and a clear vision on the strand summons them to break their fast. Or in a night season of the soul's despondency there comes One knocking at the door. He proposes to come in and sup.

There is, of course, all the difference in the world between this mystical Presence and the contact with our fellow men. It was, remember, expedient that He should go away. For in all contact through the senses there remains an element of impurity and uncertainty; the touch of spirit coming with the dusty finger of death. But in that subsensuous contact of spirit with spirit, where communion is direct and elemental, not entrusted to shapes or sights or sounds, a certainty is attainable to which the senses are strangers. We have retreated into the citadel of Consciousness; and it is in that sure citadel, where the soul says *I am I*, that it exclaims with sudden rapture, *It is the Lord.* It would be idle to say more, but it would be faithless to say less. This certitude of immediate contact with the spirit-Christ is given to those who watch.

2. But, again, there is a manifestation of Jesus where two or three are gathered in His name. In large church assemblies, where the senses are much occupied, this Parousia may easily be missed. Where Ritualism has conquered, it takes the place of

the Parousia. Where the human element is strong, either in the assumption of a preacher or in undue homage paid to him, or where men seek honour one of another instead of from God alone, the Parousia may become impossible. And it would be idle to pretend that Jesus is, in this sense, present in all the church assemblies that are held in Christendom. Catholicism has degraded the very notion of His presence by asserting it in the bread which the priest has consecrated. This reduces His coming to magic, and dissociates it from all moral and spiritual ideas. They who are taught to believe that the Parousia of Jesus is in certain *opera operata*, in certain buildings, or in certain forms, are little likely to discover His presence at all. Consequently Catholics, dissatisfied with the dead Christ of the Eucharist, seek the living Christ in the Pope.

But notwithstanding the corruptions and the dulness of church assemblies, the truth remains that where men are veritably and consciously gathered in His name, He appears in the midst of them. *So as I have seen Thee in the sanctuary* is a phrase full of meaning to pious souls.

And as the manifestation is definitely not through the senses; as it is even hindered by the likeness of anything that is in the earth beneath or in the heaven above; as the fumes of incense, the roll of

organs, the eloquence of preachers, and the other modes by which we impose upon our senses, will almost certainly be obstacles to be overcome—the chance of seeing the Lord in the assembly depends entirely on the watching with which the task is approached. In going to any assembly for Christian worship it is essential to be spiritually on the alert. Watching in such a connection means the realisation that Christ has promised to manifest God to us in the assembly, that the pure in heart shall see Him, that if with all our heart we seek we shall find Him.

It is true that in these assemblies Christ manifests Himself frequently to those who are unprepared, with the startling suddenness and with the lasting effects with which He appeared to Paul on the way to Damascus. But it is when believing men have charged the atmosphere of the assembly with faith, and when the word is proclaimed by those who are on the watch for souls, and indeed generally when the assembly has been arranged with much prayer and vigilant expectation of the Lord's presence, that the power of the Lord is present to heal.*

Probably nothing would conduce so powerfully to the salvation of the world as if Christian men would accustom themselves to hold the church assemblies

* Luke v. 17.

in watchful faith and prayer for the manifestation of Jesus. His Parousia would be felt; the unlearned and unbelieving would be judged; the secrets of their hearts would be made manifest, and so they would fall down on their faces and worship God, declaring that God was in us indeed.*

3. But there is another and a broader sense in which watchful eyes discern the Parousia of Jesus. They whose eyes are not turned to Him see, or fancy that they see, darkness and decline on every hand. But eyes that are kept fixed on Him see Him coming in all parts of the world. This difference between the unwatching and the watching observers suggests that watching purges the eyes and reveals the things unseen. The Parousia of Jesus in the events of our time is certainly manifest enough.

Mr. Gulick, surveying the world from his post as a missionary in Japan, sees a growth of the kingdom of God, which is a miracle unveiled. The steady and amazing progress of missions in this century, the improvements in Christian countries, the slow but sure predominance of the countries which have admitted the Bible over Roman Catholic lands, the penetration of modern thought by the ideas and the spirit of Christ, are developed by a series of charts

* 1 Cor. xiv. 25.

and figures which are irrefragable.* It would be well if those who are despondent at the slow progress of the kingdom would study this invaluable book, and learn to recognise the Parousia of Jesus in the march of events. Africa, China, Japan, and India exclaim, *He is here.* And His presence is shown by the very animosity with which it is resented. The frenzy of Atheism and the resistance of Superstition are the writhing of demons, that know their time is come, and cry out against a present Christ, "What have we to do with Thee, Jesus thou Son of God?"

A foolish optimism is irritating; it seems to be but the reflection of an easy temper, or of comfortable circumstances, or of personal health. But on the other hand, no one can watch the world of to-day in the light of Christ without becoming conscious that in the most manifest way the kingdom comes.

Out of the shadow of night
The world rolls into light,
There is daybreak everywhere.

Watch, therefore, says the Lord. Let your eyes be washed with the dew of the morning and observant of His appearing, and you may see Him even now coming in His glory, and all the holy angels

* *The Growth of the Kingdom of God.* S. L. Gulick, M.A. (R.T.S.)

with Him, and the nations divided on His right hand and His left. Let the soul answer in the words of the prophet: "I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will look forth to see what He will speak with me."

CHAPTER XVII

THE SACRAMENTS

IN the last chapter we were led incidentally to touch upon the manifestation of Christ which, according to the teaching of the Catholic Church, He makes in one of the sacraments. But a singular effect is produced if one turns from the teaching of a Sacramental Church to the teaching of Jesus. Compare the place which the sacraments hold in Catholicism with that which they hold in the New Testament. To Catholicism they are essential; they *are* religion. To Jesus they come on the bye. He hardly spoke half a dozen sentences about them. He gave them no specific name such as "sacrament." In instituting the principal one, that of the Supper, He gave no indication that He intended anything more than a memorial feast. Baptism He commanded, but only as a sign taken over from His predecessor, a sign of a baptism with the Holy Ghost and with fire which His predecessor had been unable to give. Of

the other five "sacraments" He says no word, though Confirmation, Orders, Penance, Marriage, and Unction were all of them subjects on which He touched. He touched them, but in no sacramental sense. As sacraments He did not enjoin any of them. And perhaps the most determined slight which could be passed on the whole sacramental idea is this: that the writer of the New Testament who seems to express most completely the thought of Jesus—St. John—does not think it necessary to mention even the sacrament of the Supper. He dwells with a fulness of detail on what passed in the upper chamber on the night before Jesus died; but the so-called institution of the sacrament he passes by in silence. That he did not slight the spiritual truth which the institution symbolises is plain from the full report which he gives in ch. vi. of the teaching that Jesus was the bread of life, and that only by eating His flesh and drinking His blood could we have eternal life. St. John does not connect this truth with the sacrament at all. Doubtless he caught the mind of the Master. Eating the flesh of Jesus is something much more than the sacrament, or it is nothing. There have been priests and even Popes who have eaten and drunk the elements of the sacrament continually, but have never eaten the flesh or drunk the blood of the Son of Man. And

there have been those who have never partaken of a visible sacrament, and yet have fed upon the flesh and the blood of Christ, in the sense that John and his Master attached to the words: "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I have spoken unto you are spirit and are life."*

Wyclif was therefore within the mark when he taught that the Church would not perish even if the sacraments and sacramental usages were taken away. For to Wyclif Christ the Saviour was Pope and priest and bishop, and had the power to bestow the grace of salvation without the symbols. Still, though they occupy a very secondary place in the commandments of Jesus, and only occupy a place at all as the symbols of certain great spiritual realities, we could not omit the definite commandment *Do this in remembrance of me* from even a brief survey of His injunctions to His Disciples.

As to Baptism, we can hardly say that He enjoined it as a command. He rather assumed it as a practice, which He took over from John the Baptist.† He did not Himself baptize, but He permitted His Disciples to do it. In taking it for granted, however, that converts would be baptized with water, He laid stress on the fact that the Spirit must

* John vi. 63. † John iv. 12.

operate, or the water would be ineffectual.* It was for this reason that the baptism of John remained ineffectual. May we not say that for the same reason baptized Christendom is so largely unchristian? The Church has substituted the baptism of water for the baptism of Jesus, and has breathed the corrupting doctrine that the baptism of water *is* the baptism of Jesus.

On one other occasion He mentioned baptism. And the occasion is sufficiently important to make the vast majority of Christians regard baptism as a definite requirement of the kingdom of God. In sending out His Apostles to instruct the world, He said that they should do it by baptizing men into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, and by teaching them to observe whatsoever He commanded them.†

This conjunction equally requires us to baptize, and forbids us to attach an undue meaning to it. We cannot omit baptism without violating this particular commandment; we cannot attach a magical meaning to it without violating all the rest of the commandments. To baptize men into the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost is the first step towards teaching them all that Jesus commanded. But to assume that the act of baptism in

* John iii. 5. † Matt. xxviii. 20.

water is of itself a baptism in the spirit, and a new birth such as He spoke of in John iii. 5, makes it impossible to teach them all that He commanded. It even prevents them from seeking that new birth and that baptism of the Spirit without which His commandments cannot be fulfilled.

It is because this baptism of Jesus is the first step in teaching human beings the commandments of Jesus that we baptize the child as soon after birth as possible, since the teaching of His commandments should, for Christian parents and in Christian Churches, begin with the first dawn of intelligence, and be the regulative principle of all the education which a child receives.

When the Church has introduced the dogma of Baptismal Regeneration men will be driven into the other extreme of the Baptists, and refuse baptism until the age of discretion and the personal faith are reached. But when we bring baptism back to precisely the place which Jesus assigned, and recognise it as the claim which is made upon all by the saving grace of God, and as the pledge of instruction in all that Jesus commanded us, we feel that we should miss the intention of our Lord if we failed to begin with our own children in their earliest infancy. It is to them first, as nearest to us and most in our power, that the obligation is due when

the Lord commands: *Go and make disciples of all, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you.* The making disciples is an act which begins with baptism and is continued by instruction: the baptism can be given as soon as a child is born; the instruction can begin so soon as he understands.

In controversies so heated as those which still rage over the subject of baptism, it is difficult to keep from "the falsehood of extremes." But a close and exclusive attention to our Lord's words upon the subject, and to the place which He gives it in His system of religion, offers the one chance of a mediation between divided brethren. He is our peace and breaks down the middle wall of partition. And if the controversy is ever to cease before He comes, it will be by this recurrence to His authority, which, by forbidding the idea of a magical regeneration produced by baptism, will render it possible to baptize all nations and all persons, even unconscious children, as the beginning of the instruction which He enjoins. In Him alone can Augustine and Calvin and Zwingle be agreed.

But we have now to give our attention to the sacrament which Jesus more expressly enjoined. That is to say, He put His commandment with

regard to it in the imperative form: *This do in remembrance of me.*

This rite also He took over from the old religion. As the new baptism was borrowed from John, but transformed by the formula "into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," so the Supper was a new Paschal feast; it was the form which the Paschal feast was to take now that the Lamb of God was to be sacrificed for the redemption of the world. We cannot therefore be wrong in recognising that though it was no sacrifice itself, it was the memorial of a sacrifice offered once for all. *This do in remembrance of me* throws us back in a spirit of recollection on what He did as the sacrifice for sin, which took the place of all the ineffectual sacrifices of the Jewish altar. And the correction is put beyond a doubt by His words: *This is the blood of the new covenant which is shed for the remission of sins.*

We have, then, in the sacrament an act to be repeated, at intervals which are not specified, until He comes again, as a memorial of the sacrifice of Jesus. The Lamb slain for the sin of the world takes the place of the Paschal lamb. In place of the feast which commemorates the Exodus comes a meal which celebrates the forgiveness of sin. Its purpose is to keep in lasting and loving remembrance

the redemptive act of Jesus, and the manner in which He spiritually communicates Himself to those who believe. It is not necessary for our purpose to trace the steps by which this commemorative meal was gradually changed in character, by which the symbolic act was hardened into a stiff literalism, and the theory was advanced that the bread and wine were actually changed into the body and blood of Jesus. Eight hundred years after the event, in 844 A.D., the doctrine of transubstantiation was propounded by Paschasius Radbert. The bread and wine, he said, remain as far as colour and taste are concerned; otherwise there would be no room for faith; but within, the substance of the bread and wine is actually changed into the flesh and blood of Christ.* This daring materialism provoked a reply from Rabanus Maurus and Ratramnus. But in the Catholic Church Paschasius won the day, and for a thousand years Catholics have been required to believe that the sacrament is no mere memorial of the great transaction, but the actual body and blood of Christ, which demand the worship of the devout. Gradually also there grew up the idea that the person of Christ was offered as a sacrifice afresh on every Catholic

* *De corpore et sanguine Domini*, 7, 2; "Substantia panis et vini in Christi carnem et sanguinem efficaciter interius commutatur," 8, 2.

altar, and the priest found his appropriate function in presenting—after first making!—the bloodless victim. It seems incredible that any one should seriously maintain that "do" in the command *This do*, is a technical term for to sacrifice.* But to this strait Catholic controversialists have been reduced in the attempt to justify the sacrificial theory of the Supper.

But we may say that the notion of the Mass and the Priest is far too modern for us who are engaged in the study of Christ's commandments. Not only is the notion remote from all His thoughts, but no point of lodgment can be found in His words for any such theory. We must speak with reverence of a belief which is devoutly cherished by 200,000,000 of our fellow creatures. But truth obliges us to maintain that if that belief had no other support than the words of Jesus or the practice of the Apostles, it would be frankly surrendered as untenable.

We may—and we must—return to the original commandment of Jesus, and seek to understand what He meant when He said, *This do in remembrance of me.* For while we may be at a loss to explain how the astonishing doctrine of Catholicism has grown out of the institution, or how an act so little emphasised at the time should have become

* ποιεῖν ἱρά in Greek meant to perform the sacrifices.

imperceptibly the main feature of the worship of a great portion of Christendom, an unprejudiced consideration of the circumstances of the commandment must lead us to attach a high significance to it, and to determine that we will not err by underrating it.

The last request of a dying friend is sacred, and when the request is for remembrance it has a peculiarly pathetic appeal. But in the case of Jesus it is a Saviour, our Saviour, that is to be remembered, and the symbolic rite that He suggests is designed to recall the very method by which He saves. Every word therefore is sacred. *Take, eat; this is my body. Drink ye all of this, it is the blood of the New Testament.* As oft as ye eat and drink ye show the Lord's death till He come. *Do this in remembrance of me.* If He had given a hint that the bread and wine were to be consecrated by priests, or that by the consecration transubstantiation would take place; or if He had suggested the idea of a sacrifice instead of a meal, and bidden us offer it on an altar instead of eating it upon a table—all this would be sacred to us. But because we cannot attach the same sacredness to the corrupted practice of the centuries that we do to His own words, we attach more and not less sacredness to His own words. When He says, *This is my body*, and *This is my blood*, speaking while His body was not broken nor His blood shed, we know that

He uses the terms symbolically, just as He does when He says I am the Vine, or I am the Door. It would be a wilful disregard of His plain meaning if we were to give to His words an interpretation which was an afterthought, conceived in the hearts of priests who were casting about for a priestly function to justify their existence in the Christian Church. His words are explicit and rich enough. *Do this in remembrance of me* establishes once and for all the point that it is a *memorial* rite; it establishes the point that the significance lies in the recollection of Him and of His sacrifice; it establishes the point that it is in eating and drinking, and not in offering, that the memorial consists; and also it establishes the point that the act of eating and drinking, as an external rite, is to be perpetuated in the community of disciples. Just as we feel it presumptuous to read more into His words than He has placed there, so we feel it dishonouring to Him to read less.

Now let us try to draw out what, in view of all the circumstances, the words permanently imply. Is it not this?—Assuming that by faith you have come to the Lamb of God that takes away the sins of the world, and that by His precious blood you have been cleansed from sin and pardoned; assuming that you are living by faith in the Son of God

who loved you and gave Himself for you, living in a relation so intimate that it is like the union between the branch and the vine, and that you draw upon Him for the nourishment of the spirit precisely as you take bread and wine for the nourishment of the body; assuming, too, that you are in a society of believing persons, who walk in the light, and have fellowship one with another, so that the blood of Jesus cleanses them from all sin—then you shall meet at stated times and celebrate this outward rite as the symbol and the witness of that interior life; and the memorial of these inestimable facts shall in its turn aid that inner life.

That is to say, the rite is given to those who have entered into a certain experience, not to produce the experience, but to give it a visible and social expression. They who are told to observe it are disciples, and the value of the observance lies in the constant facts of their discipleship. The supernatural element is not in the observance itself, but in the underlying spiritual facts which it symbolises. Those facts are the product of the Spirit of God taking the things of Christ and communicating them to the soul through faith. No faith in the observance will be a substitute for the faith in Jesus which produces those spiritual facts. Though one should have an unswerving faith in the bread being the flesh and the wine being the

blood of Jesus, or in the virtue of a priest to effect the transformation and to offer the sacrifice, that faith will be ineffectual, the sacrament will be inoperative, unless the recipient has antecedently accepted Jesus Christ in the heart as the Saviour from sin, and learnt in a spiritual experience to derive direct cleansing, life, and power from Him. This seems to be the interpretation which the Apostles, and the Church in its pristine purity, put upon the ordinance.

But from this interpretation there follows what experience confirms, that to take the memorial rite, or sacrament, apart from these underlying realities of life, is useless. There is no good in a memorial if it is the memorial of nothing. What a mockery is the most elaborate monument to one who never existed! To kiss the locket of a friend that exists only in imagination, or to venerate an empty room because some one lived there who never lived there, is not more futile than to take the Supper of the Lord when there is no experience of Him, His sacrifice, His pardoning love, and sustaining power underlying. This futility of the sacrament as an *opus operatum* may easily be demonstrated by observing persons who, without the inward experience of religion, are yet scrupulous communicants. They are none the better. Spiritually they were dead

statues before, and they are dead statues painted after. They do not become pure in heart, or truthful, or charitable, or intelligent in prayer, or proficient in saving souls, by being regular at Mass, or at the altar, or at the Communion table. The victim is offered; the flesh is eaten with the lips, or the blood is drunk; but they have no real part in Christ. Their unregenerate hearts are unregenerate still.

If the sacrament were what Sacramentalists imagine, then the reception of Incarnate God into the system would have an effect quite apart from the spiritual life that underlies. Every communicant would be incorporated in the body of Christ. Being first regenerated by water, and then miraculously fed by the physical assimilation of the person of God, every Catholic would be divine, and the fruits of the divine life would appear perforce in the Catholic's life and in the Catholic countries. But the doctrine does not bear investigation. Conceive the Spaniards with their Lord's body in their physical system, and their priests who have digested His blood, moving on to the bloody arena of the bull-fight. Of course it would in a way make religion simpler if sacraments could save, if baptismal water really regenerated, and the Mass or the Communion could really impart Christ to the soul. But fact is against the theory; and the theory is a product of Paganism rather than

of Christianity. No example can be cited of the sacrament producing the Christian life unless it is already there by faith in a living, present, and personal Saviour.

But more than this. Not only is it useless to take the sacrament apart from the spiritual and inward realities; it is also attended with grave danger to the soul. For as St. Paul says, such a lifeless and unreflecting observance of an outward rite implies a contempt—a hypocritical contempt—for that hidden and spiritual reality. St. Paul's phrase is graphic and impressive: "He that eateth and drinketh, eateth and drinketh judgment unto himself, if he discern not the body."* The meaning is not obscure. The bread and wine represent the transcendent facts of redemption, the sacrifice of Jesus for the salvation of the world, the living of Jesus in the life of the believer, the drawing together into one of those who believe in Him, forming a mystical body. The body of Jesus, offered for sin, and then through its redemptive and life-giving power saving those who believe, and incorporating them into Himself, that spiritual body—which is the Church—is the reality represented by these emblems on the Lord's table. When a man takes the emblems without recognising that body, without any recollection of it, without

* 1 Cor. xi. 29.

any sense of his own incorporation in it, and therefore without any gratitude to the Lord who bought him, or any love to the brethren who were bought, he tramples underfoot the blood of the covenant, he presents himself in the presence of God recklessly ignoring the truths of God. And by presuming to take the outward symbols of things which for him have no inner reality, he incurs the condemnation of God, and purchases his portion with the hypocrites. St. Paul does not hesitate to ascribe even physical disease and death to this flagrant violation of the sacred Supper.*

Now, when this possibility is faced and the warnings are attended to, it is not uncommon for persons who have some pretensions to be considered Christians to shrink from the act of communion, under the impression that they might add to their guilt by making this kind of profession. At least, they say, we will not be hypocrites.

But they do not seem to observe that while they may escape the charge of hypocrisy, they do not escape that of disobedience. *Do this in remembrance of me* is His commandment. It is an unheard-of answer to give to Him, an answer like that of the servant who hid the talent because his master was an austere man, to say, I did not obey Thy last and

* 1 Cor. xi. 30.

dying commandment, because if I had done so I should have been a hypocrite! Must not the inevitable answer be: I bade thee to do this, and to do it sincerely; it is no excuse to say that thou couldst not do it because it would not have been sincere. For observe: Just as the reality underlying the Communion is a definite requirement, and you are commanded, discerning the Lord's body, to repent and to believe in Him, and to enter into the communion of His body; and as indeed this reality is the object of all the commandments from the initial Repent, to that New Commandment with which we have yet to deal; so this social memorial of the reality is a definite commandment, and the woe is pronounced on those who break one of the least of His commandments. He bids you observe this ordinance, as a symbol and a witness of the hidden life, because He has first bidden you to live the hidden life. If you observe the ordinance without entering upon the life, you doubtless incur judgment; but if on the other hand you live, or try to live, the life, and make a point of dutifully obeying His commandments, with what consistency can you refuse to obey this simple and definite commandment, which stands alone as the one outward, social, and church observance that He in His wisdom has seen fit to give?

If He had elaborated a ceremonial law like that of Judaism or Catholicism, there would be millions, too prone to express religion in rites, and to make rites the substitute for religion, who would scrupulously keep the whole round of dreary routine. But when, sweeping away that dusty and inefficacious routine, He selects one simple outward ordinance, and requires it to be kept for the touching purpose of remembering Him, and when in His economy of outward forms He covers the whole secret development of the spiritual life—the faith, the cleansing, the pardon, the nutriment, the incorporation in Himself—with this one outward form, how can you justify your neglect of it? If you cannot honestly observe it, then it appeals to you with commanding authority to turn in repentance and faith to Him, and to begin the life of faith which will issue in this memorial rite. But if in a way you could honestly observe it, and hold back simply from scrupulosity, or from inadvertence, because you had not realised that here is a specific commandment of your Lord which you are bound to obey, allow the commandment to sound again in your ears and ask yourself a rigorous question. *This do in remembrance of me.* "Why have I never done this in remembrance of Him?"

There is a question of interest which may be

mentioned if not discussed. What was the motive for instituting this outward rite, and only this one? And especially in view of the abuses which have grown out of it—the idolatry to which it has given occasion, and the deadening effect of the sacerdotalism for which it has furnished an excuse—why should not our Lord, who trusted everything to the Spirit, who founded no Church, no rites, no hierarchy, but was content only with seeds of truth dropped into the soil of disciples' hearts, have made His spiritual structure complete by omitting this rite along with all the rest?

To this an answer may be suggested. He wished His disciples in all time to be one. He knew that unity without an external symbol is apt to evade the gross thought of man. He foresaw that in the growth of the world, and in the divergences of life, unity could never be obtained by an external Church —there should be one flock, but many folds—nor by a definite hierarchy of bishops and priests and deacons, or of Pope, Metropolitans, &c. If He had fixed His hopes on a unity of that cast-iron kind He would not only have been disappointed: He would have frustrated some of the most fruitful germs of His evangel. His Church has always flourished best where these artificial definitions of unity—not His, but man's—have been shattered. It is not in

Catholic Europe, but in the freedom and expansion of the modern Protestant world, that the leaven of the kingdom works most effectively.

Yet He wished to have one touch of observance which would link the ages and the varied Churches in a visible unity, until He should come. And He found it in this natural and simple memorial of the Last Supper. If that was the purpose, how admirably has it been fulfilled! For notwithstanding the incredible divergences of faith and practice in the Christian Church, here is a point, open to the eyes even of the world, which unites all the scattered interpretations of Christianity. In the imposing ceremonial of Rome, where the bell tinkles and the ministrants fall on their knees, and where the sacred wafer is put in the tabernacle, and the chalice is elevated; in the solemn service of Lutheranism or in the chaste compromise of Anglicanism; in the assembly upon the Scotch mountain-side, when the tables have been fenced, and the awed multitude draw near to eat and to drink; in the spread table of Independent or Baptist, where the minister and the deacons convey to the worshipping church the tokens of the sacrifice and of the love that make them one; in the close communion of brethren, met on the Lord's Day morning for the breaking of bread; and in a hundred different forms, this one

thought of obedience to His last command draws His Church together in one. It appears that communities which for some cause or another have renounced this visible rite gradually lose the church character and dwindle away. But all who keep it keep a unity of spirit which outward differences are powerless to destroy.

And not only so, but the sense of the long continuity, derived through the centuries and passing out into centuries yet to come, has an even more inspiring effect upon the realisation of unity. At the table we are again with the Church in the Catacombs or with Thomas à Kempis at the altar. At the table we freely commune with all who have gone before us since the days of the Apostles, and even with those who will come after us,

> And thus that dark betrayal night
> With the last advent we unite
> By one blest chain of loving rite,
> Until He come.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE NEW COMMANDMENT

John xiii. 34.

ALL the commandments of Jesus seem to be variations on the theme of love: He has summed up the Law and the Prophets in that one word; and He has developed the one thought in a series of details which betray at every point their connection with one another in the root of love. It would therefore be impossible to speak of the commandment to love as a new one; that commandment He had implicitly given them from the beginning. The newness of the commandment which comes at the end must be sought in a quality or attribute of love rather than in love itself. And this determining element which constitutes the novelty of the command is expressed in a very unmistakable way. The peculiar style of John, which secures emphasis by repetitions with significant additions, brings out the point by placing it in the centre like the boss of the shield. *A new*

commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; even as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. In John's mode of composition it is not possible to separate the first clause from the second: the first states the idea, the second gives its determining quality. The new commandment is not that ye love one another, but that *as I have loved you* ye may love one another.

From the nature of the case this commandment could only be given when the earthly life was drawing to its close. It is introduced by the words—*having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end.* He had been with them almost daily for twenty-eight months or so, and there was deployed before their memory His mode of dealing with them. They could not fail in looking back to distinguish not only a certain degree but a certain kind of love, which He had exhibited towards them. It was specific, and the more they reflected the more specific it would appear. And as He called to their recollection this manner of love, He gave it as His commandment that they should love one another in the same manner. The stress is on the *as*. It is in the Greek peculiarly emphatic, both in its form, and in the position which it occupies in the sentence. As He had loved them during those months from the day when He called the first of them, to this close

of His ministry when He was to leave them, so He would have them to love one another. Just that kind and degree of love, that quality and fervour, that mode of expressing and preserving it, He wished to see developed among them. By that seal and stamp He would have them recognised in the world as His disciples.

There is, or there was supposed to be, a Platonic love, and the disciples or schools of Plato might be expected to exhibit it. But there is a Christ-love, a love in many respects very different from the love which men usually exhibit to one another; and this new kind of love was to be the distinguishing mark of the disciples and schools of Christ.

And let us say at once that it has been as He wished. His presence and power in the world have been marked by this light of love. And discerning eyes have been able to discredit and unveil many pretentious societies which have claimed to be His Church and to represent Him, simply by the fact that they did not exhibit one to another the love which Christ had to His Disciples. The Church has selected different characteristics as the note of the true Church. There is something which might almost provoke a smile in the idea of pointing to "three orders of ministry" or to the Papal supremacy as the essential determinants of the Church. These

external things are irrelevant and determine nothing. The Master Himself may surely be allowed to settle by what marks His society of disciples should be known. With His decision all the vain pretensions of ecclesiastical exclusiveness fall to the ground. *By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.* And what He means in this connection by love is that love which He showed to His own while He was with them in the flesh.

But since we are led to fix on this quality of love as the distinguishing note of the new commandment, it is evident that we must engage in a careful study of the character of this love. We must not cheat ourselves with the vague platitudes of love. Love is the word, of all others, most cruelly abused. It is made to cover a gamut of passions from the bestial cravings of lust up to the sacred bond which unites man and wife in a pure marriage. It is used indiscriminately for that weak self-indulgence which leads a fond parent to spoil a child, and for that redemptive passion which leads God to save the world. People without affection sign themselves *Your loving friend.* So complete is the confusion that we speak of loving a certain kind of amusement, or even a certain kind of food. It is a miracle that in such degradations the sacred word retains its

dignity and divinity. But the ignoble uses, more frequent and more prominent than the rightful use, remind us how easily we may miss the new commandment by dwelling on love in general instead of accurately marking the particular kind of love. While we speak of loving *as* men love one another, we do not even touch the meaning of the new commandment. Our task is to comprehend the special way in which Jesus loved His Disciples, to lay dawn the lines and to expose the motives of His love; and then as His love becomes plain to us —and by meditation and reading it may become very plain—we are to understand that in that way, with that discrimination, with that purpose, in that degree, we are commanded to love one another.

There is no part of the commandments of Jesus where the pen halts and the mind misgives more than when one attempts to delineate *how* Jesus loved His Disciples. A bare statement of the facts narrated in the Gospels might be easy, but it would be inadequate. The love of Christ, as a deep which is unsearchable, is betrayed here and there by these surface signs; but it is only when we are led to track the signs up to their origin and to make some experiments for ourselves in the nature of His love, that the hints in the Gospels become luminous. To speak properly of the love of Christ one must have

begun to love men as He did, for it is only love that is the perfect interpreter of love, and it is when we are "rooted and grounded in love" that we are "strong to apprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge."

It must be understood, therefore, that in the following tentative suggestions there is no pretence of exhausting the theme *how* Christ loved His Disciples. We are standing on the shore of a boundless and unfathomed sea, and we mark some of its more obvious characteristics that we may distinguish it from the shallow lakes, or land-locked pools, or quickly failing torrents, which pass for love amongst men. We cannot plumb or compass the sea, but in an imperfect manner we may define it.

1. Now if we attempt to summon up the facts of His intercourse with the Disciples in order that we may characterise His love to them, the first thing which strikes us is the complete absence of sentimental or emotional elements. If the comparison may be made without irreverence, contrast the love of Jesus towards His Disciples with the love of Socrates to Alcibiades as it is developed in Plato's *Symposium*. One must remember that in that curious sentiment which seems to balance itself and waver over the mingling waters of sensual passion and the border-

land of philosophy, we have as it were the highest that the ancient world had reached in love.*

But in the love of Jesus there is absolutely no trace of what is known as passion. That the men whom He loved had some charm of person, or manner, or speech, does not come into consideration at all. It is quite conceivable that some of them were what we should call lovable. We can imagine feeling a warm affection for Peter, whose impulsive nature, with quick expressions of devotion, would in some of us at any rate evoke a ready response. John was, or became, a decidedly lovable character, and it would seem that Jesus, as a man and a friend,

* That the comparison between Christ's love and love as Socrates explained it is not altogether irrelevant may be shown by the following quotation:

"This is that life above all others which man should live, in the contemplation of beauty absolute; a beauty which if you once beheld, you would see not to be after the measure of gold, and garments, and fair boys and youths, whose presence now entrances you; and you and many a one would be content to live seeing only and conversing with them without meat and drink, if that were possible—you only want to be with them and look at them. But what if men had eyes to see the true beauty—the divine beauty I mean, pure and clear and unalloyed, not clogged with the pollutions of mortality and all the colours and vanities of human life—thither looking and holding converse with the true beauty divine and simple? Do you not see that in that communion only, beholding

entertained a personal affection for him, so that he was designated "the disciple whom Jesus loved." But these personal feelings do not affect the general character of the love which Jesus exhibited to His own. If, presuming on an apparent partiality, James and John aspired to a special distinction in the kingdom, they were ignominiously rebuked. If Peter mistook the recognition of his eager faith as a ground for presumptuous counsel, he was checked by the terrible words: *Get thee behind me, Satan.*

However the ambition of individuals might provoke resentment in the circle of the Disciples, no one could murmur on the ground of the Master's partiality. His love to them was entirely dis-

beauty with the eye of the mind, he will be enabled to bring forth, not images of beauty, but realities (for he has hold not of an image but of reality), and bringing forth and nourishing true virtue to become the friend of God and to be immortal, if mortal man may. Would that be an ignoble life?" (*Symposium*, § 211, 212).

Or again: "Know you that beauty and wealth and honour, at which the many wonder, are of no account with him [Socrates], and are utterly despised by him; he regards not at all the persons who are gifted with them; mankind are nothing to him; all his life is spent in mocking and flouting at them." This is said by Alcibiades, who adds: "But when I opened him and looked within at his serious purpose, I saw in him divine and golden images of such fascinating beauty that I was ready to do in a moment whatever Socrates commanded" (*Id.* § 216).

entangled from their personal qualities, good or bad; it had no regard to their graces or their talents. But for its amazing strength and constancy, and the frequent emphasis on the fact that He had chosen them and drawn them to Himself with "the bands of a man," they might almost have supposed that it was not a personal love at all. There was nothing to flatter their vanity in their relation to Him, nothing to suggest that they were better than others, or that they were called for their superiority. If He allowed them a feeling that they had been a comfort to Him—*ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations**—if He made it clear that they were chosen for an honourable if difficult enterprise—they could not possibly have imagined that they were called to fill a place which none others could have filled; it must frequently have struck them that there were thousands who could have done what they were called to do, and that if He had lavished the same care and training on others that He had on them, they would have been better friends and more profitable servants.

And yet, while all the flattering elements of a personal selection, and of a personal attachment, were absent, there was no mistaking the intensity of His love to them, or the ground on which He

* Luke xxii. 28.

exhibited it. He loved them, and they knew it; and it must have been a consolation to them to know that His love did not rest on the uncertain characteristics which secure popularity and affection among men, but on some surer and more unworldly principle.

2. The principle on which He grounded His love was expressed on the occasion when He implicitly repudiated His mother and brethren after the flesh, and declared that whosoever did the will of His Father in heaven, the same was His mother, or sister, or brother. It is this principle of selection —so alien to the manner of our earthly loves— which gives to His love a quality, unimpassioned but unchangeable, such as we find it difficult to attain.

We think it a great gain in the quality of love when we turn from the merely sensuous attractions of beauty, and love people for their mental or spiritual qualities. And we rightly feel that a still further step has been taken when we give our best love not to mere gifts of intellect or will, but to enduring qualities of character. But Jesus carried His love a little higher in the scale, and fixed His affections, not on beauty or talent, or the common virtues of life, but on the basis of doing the Father's will. Those who did the Father's will were bound

to Him by family ties. Such a principle carries one far away from "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the vainglory of life," and plants the slips of human love under the shadow of the parent-tree, the love of the Father.

We may hesitate at first in withdrawing the sacred name of love from all the passions which are below this transcendent standard of the love of the Father; but it is only by such a daring expurgation that love is liberated and vindicated. Strictly speaking, love is not, except in God. Those frenzied desires which are awakened by physical beauty and seek their satisfaction in sensuous indulgence; those infatuated attachments which ignore and renounce God, and drift for ever through the murky atmosphere of hell, like Paolo and Francesca, unsatisfied and tormented; those changing ties which, being bound only on earth, are snapped by the first strain in the shocks of eternity—these and similar passions, usurping the name of love, are not to be admitted as love.

> Let me not to the marriage of true minds
> Admit impediments. Love is not love
> Which alters when it alteration finds,
> Or bends with the remover to remove.

It would be found on Shakespeare's own definition that love, in the true sense of the word, unalterable

and eternal love, can only exist when it is given on the basis of doing the will of God.

Passion only stains love; pure love is passionless. Love which roots itself in selfish preferences, and feeds upon the gratification of personal desires, is doomed to die, for selfishness is the antithesis of love. But the love of God is pure, and to love men because they do or desire to do His will is to cherish a fire which can never be extinguished.

We have gained, then, a certain vantage ground in understanding the kind of love that Jesus felt and showed to His Disciples. Before going further, it is well to remind ourselves that such is the love which we are to entertain to each other as His disciples. We eliminate all the lower affections which occur, and legitimately occur, in human life. We do not here speak of the love to sinners which belongs to God, to Christ, and to us as Christians. But our thought is concentrated on the sentiment which must prevail among the disciples of Christ. It was when Judas had gone out that the New Commandment was given. The love which disciples were to entertain could not be extended to the traitor and the hypocrite; the saving love to traitors and hypocrites is on another plane. We find that to love one another as Christ loved, to love with that love which was to be the badge of His disciples for

ever, we must have a pure and unchangeable love towards all who are doing the will of God, a love which is far removed from personal preferences, and freed entirely from sexual and animal passion,* a holy and steady flame of sympathy, appreciation, solicitude, and affection, derived from the central altar of the love of the Father, and set burning in every part of the world where people are seeking to do His will.

3. But we must now pass to the salient feature of the love which Christ manifested to His Disciples: His love was educational. He loved them in the sense that He loved what they were capable of becoming, and so loved them as to realise that possibility. There is no study in the Gospels more interesting—and it is comparatively a modern one—than to trace the method by which Jesus trained these eleven men—rejecting the twelfth — in the virtues and graces of the spiritual life.† Nothing could be more unobtrusive than His training;

* Love meet they who do not shove
Cravings in the van of love.
Woods of Westermain—GEORGE MEREDITH.

† Professor A. B. Bruce's *Training of the Twelve* is a masterly disquisition on the subject. And Mr. Latham's *Pastor Pastorum*, traversing the same field, gleans such an aftermath that we may suspect the subject is yet far from exhausted.

probably they never suspected what He was doing at the time. But what they knew not then, they learned after. The lessons were all beautifully graded; the pupils were taught the alphabet of faith and taken step by step to the knowledge of the language. Not an episode was out of place; nothing was thrown away.

As they were to be His Apostles when He was gone, they were sent out on preliminary journeys during His lifetime, and their efforts were carefully reviewed and criticised. Thus they were taught to trust the unseen Power, and the teaching was so delicate and effective, that when at the time of the Ascension it was completed, these simple men were prepared to shake the whole world with their irresistible conviction of Him whom eye hath not seen.*

Nothing could be more faithful and outspoken than the love of Jesus. Wherever rebuke was needed He was unsparing; but, on the other hand, where rebuke was natural, yet not likely to prove

* "When I say that the Apostles were *taught* faith, I use the word *taught* in a different sense from that which it has when applied to the subjects of knowledge. I mean that through wise moral treatment a quality existing only as a rudiment was so developed as to fit the disciples for communion with God; and not only in this sense did they learn faith, but—what we also need learning more than we suppose—love and hope as well." *Pastor Pastorum*, p. 468.

availing, He was silent. He never rebuked Judas, for that would have been useless. "What thou doest, do quickly," was all He said, and those simple words drove the miserable man to a remorse which ended in suicide. His rare rebukes, however, to the more teachable Disciples were singularly effective, as the rebukes of thoughtful love usually are. No one was more sternly dealt with than Peter. He was bidden to get behind, because he had no vital sympathy with divine things; and his denial was ruthlessly foretold. His protestations of love were, in the light of his failure, treated with questioning, and *Lovest thou me?* was repeated until he was grieved and ashamed. But no one learnt to savour the things of God more than Peter; no one more fully atoned for a denial; not only did he weep bitterly, but he followed his Lord in the same path of crucifixion; no one more zealously proved his love by tending and feeding the flock of Jesus.* The

* Dr. Bruce brings out a fine point in illustration of the success of the Lord's rebuke to Peter. In his first Epistle this Disciple who had been reproved for interfering with the fate of his brother-disciple John, has now learned to write: "Let none of you suffer as a murderer or as an evil-doer, or *as a busybody in other men's matters*," literally, as a bishop intruding into another's diocese. (ἀλλοτριοεπίσκοπος, 1 Peter iv. 15). The Pope as the successor of St. Peter claims to intrude into every one's diocese. *Training of the Twelve*, p. 514.

men who were rebuked so gently for their fierce wish to bring fire from heaven—*Ye know not what spirit ye are of*—received the gracious lesson into their hearts, and one of them became the typical Apostle of love. The spirit which forbade a worker because he followed not with the visible company of Jesus was by the Lord's loving discipline cast out of the Disciples; it was not till a century later that it revived again in the form of ecclesiastical intolerance. Those sad expressions of His disappointment in them, *O ye of little faith! O faithless and perverse generation! Wherefore did ye doubt?* had their full effect. These men were led to an unwavering faith, a faith which literally upheaved mountains. The rebukes of His love reached their climax at the end of His life in the question to Philip, *Have I been so long time with you, and dost thou not know me?* and in the quiet reproof to Thomas, *Reach hither thy finger and see my hands; and reach hither thy hand and put it into my side; and be not faithless, but believing.*

Here was the love of an exalted friendship which acted on its objects as a divine education, brought out of them qualities which they never seemed to possess, and prepared them for a task to which they appeared unequal. Here was the love of an ennobling mastership, which realises that life is

measured by its capacity and opportunities of service, and therefore calls men to service and drills them for the field. When we ask, How did Jesus love? we cannot give a better reply than this: He loved in such a way that the plain and commonplace peasants of Galilee became the Apostles of the Lamb.

There are no names in history so famous as those of these Galilean peasants. Little is known of them as individuals; Peter and James and John are tolerably distinct; Matthew, Thomas, Philip, Nathaniel (if, under the name of Bartholomew, we are to reckon him among the Twelve), emerge partially from their obscurity; the rest are shadows. Yet there are no names in history so famous as these; there are no eleven men who ever wrought such miracles, or so affected the course of the world. Why? How? Jesus loved them into it. Not by weak, sentimental, emotional love, but by the patient love which undertook to train them and gradually wrought a complete change in the very foundation of their being, He made them what they became. That is *how* He loved His Disciples.

We are to love one another in the same way. It is a new idea of love altogether. Here is no self-indulgence, no languishing, no inflaming and assuaging of desire. We are to love the brethren, not

to please ourselves, but to enable them to become what they are meant to be. Such love must have infinite patience. Socrates could only imagine that love could be of the beautiful and the good. Christ has taught us that love is to be of the deformed, the imperfect, if not of the bad, in order to transform them into the beautiful and the good. When love falls into self-pleasing, and turns with weariness from the brethren, to seek its own in a congenial world, it ceases to be love in the sense of Jesus.

This love of which Jesus speaks will, like His, have little to do with rebuke. If He rebuked so seldom, we shall have to rebuke even less. But it will be perfectly frank and firm, never flattering, always speaking the truth. Egotism and pride can teach nothing; unselfishness and humility are always teaching.

Though we may seem at first sight painfully unable to influence men as Jesus did, to elicit their better qualities, to train them into nobility and service and devotion, when we love in His way His power co-operates with us, and we find, to our own infinite amazement, that people are conscious of our influence upon them, and they affirm that whatever is good in them they owe under God to us!

I often wonder that this miracle—for a miracle it is—does not make more impression upon the world.

But it is of course very unobtrusive and unsensational. There was *Philophilus* for example. He was one of those quiet people who never attract any attention in a company, or appear to make any difference in a house. I hardly ever heard him finding fault with any one, and yet I remember, in looking back, that faults, both my own and those of others, gradually disappeared in his presence. If any one told a lie, he had a way of gravely accepting it as a truth, and recalling for months the false truth which had thus been communicated, until the liar was sick and miserable at the sight of his long-lived fabrication. If any one lost his temper, *Philophilus* used to quietly leave the room as if he had caught sight of a wild beast. On one occasion a stranger, who did not know him even by name, made a boast of a shabby action, intending to raise a laugh. *Philophilus* very quietly said: "Did you do it?" The speaker replied with a bluff and a guffaw, "Of course I did." *Philophilus* only said, "I am sorry." The boaster blushed, fell silent, and presently withdrew.

When *Philophilus* was dead every one who had known him was inconsolable, though few in his lifetime had said much about him. And when I tried to realise what was the nature and cause of the extraordinary influence which he exercised, I found that

it was this: he saw in each of his friends, and indeed in every human being, a certain ideal; this he loved and continued to believe in, so that his spirit was always at work liberating the ideal character which he saw from the actual character which others saw. No discouraging facts or failures upset him. I believe that if I had gone to him with a frank confession of all my sins, and had assured him that I was a scoundrel of the worst dye, he would in his quiet way have said to me: "That is not the man I see in you; the man I see in you is like the Son of God."

That we can love one another *as* Jesus loved His Disciples the case of *Philophilus*—and it does not stand alone—sufficiently proves. But I think it is evident that His love to us must have awakened a great love to Him before we have much hope of loving each other in such a way.

4. There is one other feature of the love of Jesus to His Disciples which must be mentioned for our imitation. *He loved them unto the end*, and on that last night of His life He rendered them the lowly service of washing their feet. But this humiliating love would have been, in recollection, heartbreaking if it had ended there. Nothing is more terrible than love if it dies in the grave, for all its memories are torments and doubts. The love of Jesus so clearly

ran beyond the grave that He viewed death itself as the passage into His Father's house, where He was going to prepare a home for those whom He loved. It is not necessary to elaborate a point so familiar. Treat the love of Jesus as a feeling limited to those brief years terminated by His death, and the whole story becomes a *fiasco*. In that case His love has done nothing but call a few peasants from honest and happy lives to set them on a fool's task, to make them dreamers and fanatics, the blind leading the blind into the ditch. The manner of Jesus' love acquires all its value from what went before and was to follow after. He loved with an everlasting love, which foresaw and came to seek, and went through the veil to open it for those whom He loved.

And certainly that is no love like the love of Jesus, or salutary as His was, which is abashed at death. If you would bless and help men you must love them with the love of eternity. If there are not voices speaking out of the invisible which respond to our voices on the shores of time, our voices on the shore can awake no saving echo from those who dwell up the country. It is said that on the Adriatic when the fishermen are out at sea by night the wives will come down to the beach and sing the first verse of a hymn, and the husbands will reply out of the night by singing the second. And where the love

of Jesus has linked human hearts, and some have gone out into the night, they do not cease to sing the same hymns with those who remain: the music comes faint and far, but quite distinct, out of the unknown.

And for this reason the love that we have for one another when we love as Jesus loved is one which takes no account of death. Many souls we love are seeds which will only flower in that higher air. Shall our love despair because we foresee the coming break? Far from it: we love that the break may be no break; we throw the bridge of love across the chasm.

Look at your brethren as perishable and evanescent, and love will die down within you. Everything is far too uncertain; the number is too great and distracting; the opportunities are too few. Who makes lasting friendships in an express train? Who can get deeply interested in the ship's company in crossing the Atlantic? If we are all here to-day and gone to-morrow we may give up the thought of love, except as a dalliance to lighten weary hours; we shall accept men's faults as final bars to interest, and consider that if they are uncongenial we are excused from further intercourse.

But look at them in the light of eternity, and consider them as beings with whom you may live

for ever. Each one acquires an infinite value. Though you may be able to give but an hour to an individual, it is an hour in eternity. Everything is worth while. You will not, in this world, pass this way more than once. But with a whole heart you can love and serve, persuaded that in the future all the threads intertwine again.

"Love me not," each human soul implicitly cries, "love me not as a body for my form or beauty: form changes and beauty fades with age; love me not for accidents of birth or possession, which do not intrinsically belong to me; love me not for charms which are all twisted in the yarn of time and run into the shroud of death; love me not for mental powers which flicker down in the dying brain and may have no relevancy beyond this present world of time and sense. But love me as a child of God, as a firstborn son of light, as a being who may eternally develop, a seed that can grow, a dawn which widens to a day. Love me so that in your loving the earthly and transitory fall away, and the immortal gathers reality and force. Love me as what I am destined to be, love me in God, and as God, and for God." In this way Jesus loved His Disciples.

This, then, is the New Commandment which He gave at the end: *As I have loved you, that ye also love one another.*

CHAPTER XIX

MAKE DISCIPLES OF ALL NATIONS

Matt. xxviii. 19, 20; *Luke xxiv.* 47.

THE last commandment which our Lord gave to His Disciples possesses the unique feature, that it was uttered after His triumphant exclamation on the cross: *It is finished.* All the other commandments intrinsically looked forward to that event, which was to supply the motive power for their fulfilment. But this looked back upon that event as accomplished. The offering for the sin of the world was made. He who made it was risen from the dead. Up to that point it had always been necessary in a sense to speak in parables. But now the whole design of redemption was unfolded: there was the Lamb that taketh away the sin of the world—the Lamb that had been slain from the beginning of the world, offered on the altar of the cross before the eyes of the whole creation. Here all the truth of His person and of His work was consummated, and

an objective fact was provided which could bring repentance and remission of sins to all mankind. A last commandment therefore was needed, last in point of time, but first in the order of operation. He must lay upon His prepared witnesses the task of making known to the world this truth that was meant for the world. The other commandments had referred to personal life ; this was a commandment of Evangelisation.

At an earlier time, before the work was finished, the Twelve, and even the Seventy, had been sent upon a preliminary mission to the people of Israel. The time had now come when the message could be sent to the world, and when the messengers were prepared to take it to the world. "The Twelve, at the period of their first trial mission, were not fit to preach the Gospel or to do good works, either among Samaritans or Gentiles. Their hearts were too narrow, their prejudices too strong : there was too much of the Jew, too little of the Christian in their character. For the catholic work of the Apostleship they needed a new divine illumination, and a copious baptism with the benignant spirit of love. Suppose these raw evangelists had gone into a Samaritan village, what would have happened? In all probability they would have been drawn into disputes on the religious differences between

Samaritans and Jews, in which of course they would have lost their temper; so that, instead of seeking the salvation of the people among whom they had come, they would rather be in a mood to call down fire from heaven to consume them!" *

But now their education was complete or nearing its completion, and they might lift up their eyes and see the fields of the world white unto harvest. The time had come when the Disciple should be changed into an Apostle, and he who had been so carefully trained should go out to announce in its fulness the redemptive work which had been unfolded before his eyes.

This commandment, therefore, has a unique authority, not so much for the pathetic interest that always attaches to the last will and disposition of a departing friend, as for the peculiar significance which attaches to a completed work. This is the only commandment given in view of the completed work. Up to the last He had spoken to them, telling them that they could not yet understand; He was straitened until His baptism was accomplished. Now He was released; now He could speak plainly; this was that for which from the beginning He had been among them and taught

* *The Training of the Twelve*, by Professor A. B. Bruce, p. 98.

them. He was now able to give them their marching orders. They were to go and communicate to all nations "all things whatsoever He had commanded them."

Clearly this last commandment assumes all the rest. For how would they teach all things that He commanded unless they knew and practised the commandments themselves? No one can preach repentance and remission of sins with any effect unless he has repented and his sins have been forgiven.

And because this last commandment comes as the keystone to the whole arch, we can hardly expect to obey any if we do not obey this. If we are not, to the best of our ability, teaching all nations His commandments, we may be sure that we are not obeying them. Disciples who are not teaching are not yet true disciples of His. A Church which is not heart and soul a missionary Church cannot claim to be a church of Christ.

Although for the reason we have mentioned the missionary commandment was not given till the very end, it must not be supposed that it was in any sense an afterthought. Though the Lord's own mission was to the House of Israel, and He endeavoured to confine Himself to His appointed task, and though during His lifetime He expressly limited

His Disciples to work within those borders, it is to be observed that on more than one occasion He hailed the coming of converts from the east and from the west to sit down in the kingdom of the Father, and quite naturally He on every occasion betrayed His consciousness that His Gospel should be preached in the whole world.*

Indeed, we may go further, and say that a certain world-wide application of the Gospel is implicit in every commandment that Jesus gave. No local colour, no national peculiarity, clings to His ethics. Nothing which He commanded to be done depends in the least on special conditions of race or government, of culture or knowledge. Present a list of His commandments to one who never saw them, and you may defy him to guess from what country or from what age of the world they spring. The universalist element pervades them all. So instinctively did those who received His commandments incline to go out into all the world, that in the first tentative missionary journey He felt it necessary to expressly prevent the Disciples from going into the ways of the Gentiles. What should ever have suggested to those narrowest of Jews that they should go into the ways of the Gentiles? What, except that all His teaching breathed of the world as

* Matt. xxvi. 13.

such, and broke all frontiers, and rushed over all obstacles. There was the prayer He taught them; they had only to ask what was meant by *Our*, and what was meant by *Father*. When they found themselves asking that the kingdom might come on earth, they were at once lifted above all the distinctions of race and locality.

Consider any of the cardinal sayings of Jesus: *God so loved the world*, or *I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life*, or *I am the Light of the world*, or *Whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish*, and the conviction forces itself upon you that this is for every one or for no one; there is no way of showing that it applies to any one except by showing that it applies to all. If these words, which are broad and high as the lights of heaven, are not addressed to the natives of New Guinea, or the Bantu of Africa, we have no reason for supposing that they are addressed to Europeans and Americans. We cannot get hold of them at all except by a handle which every human being is equally entitled to seize. I have no right to say, God so loved me that He gave His only begotten Son for me, unless I derive this conclusion from the major premiss that God so loved the world. All the parables have a similar burden. The Prodigal Son means nothing unless he represents the worst and most rebellious of human beings. The Good

Samaritan is employed as the pattern of saving helpfulness because he is a Gentile and worse than a Gentile. The Labourers in the Vineyard—however the parable is to be interpreted—certainly include the late-called races that had not the advantage of belonging to the Chosen People.

And if in all the commandments and lessons of Jesus the world-wide thought was implicit, still more every heart that submits itself to the domination of Jesus is expanded with the sentiment of humanity as such. The fountains of being which lie deeper than reason itself are touched. Out of these depths flow rivers of living water. Those widening and deepening streams take no pains to remain within the borders of the Holy Land: they always overflow, and cover the earth. Love Jesus, and you wish to tend His sheep and feed His lambs, nor do you ask whether the sheep are of this or of that fold. No sooner has a man taken up his cross to follow Christ, but some far-off stranger, like Simon of Cyrene, comes to share it with him. And thus the command, *Go and make disciples of all nations*, though it comes at the end, and seems at first to stand by itself, is the corollary of all that has gone before. It is a commandment which would have uttered itself, if He had not uttered it. It is the echo of all that had been said. There are many critics who

would maintain that it was not uttered by Jesus, but that it was an addition of a later age. That makes no difference. It was the commandment of Jesus uttered or unexpressed. Each of us would have added this commandment for himself if we had not found it in the Gospel. For after studying and feeling all the other commandments, after coming to the Cross, and believing in Him who was there lifted up, the natural outcry of experience is: Here is a truth capable of saving all mankind, nor can I rest until every human being knows what has brought life and peace and power to me.

But there is one consideration of a thrilling nature, which rivets our attention on this last commandment of our Lord, and gives an impulse to its fulfilment that stirs the centre of our being. It is this: It is only by virtue of this commandment, and because the Disciples obeyed it, that we ourselves—we, the inhabitants of these islands—are Christians and partakers in the blessedness of the Gospel. When the words were uttered this was the Ultima Thule of barbarism, a land as remote and improbable as the inhabitants of Kamschatka are to us. The missionary impulse drove the messengers of the Cross to our pagan ancestors, and no country we imagine was ever more intractable or slow to receive the message. The British Church was founded, and grew and

began to flourish, when the heathen Saxon invaded the country, swept away its religion, and drove the terrified survivors into the fastnesses of Wales and Cornwall. When Gregory saw the Angles in the slave-market at Rome, and was attracted by their beauty, the task, the missionary task, of converting England had to begin again. And by this time, the end of the sixth century, the Christianity of Rome itself was deeply corrupted. The insolence of the monk Augustine prevented the British Christians who survived from recognising in him a Christian missionary at all. And the imperious claims which men like Wilfrid made in the interests of Rome, although they bore down the protests of the old Scoto-Irish Christianity which flourished in the North, established a religion which, if it was Christian, was already far removed from the primitive purity of the Apostolic Church. But whatever perversions and superstitions came under the shadow of the Roman Church, Christ came to England, and laid the foundations of our national life. That is plain in the exquisite story of the life and work of Venerable Bede, or in the studies and devotions of our hero-king, Alfred the Great. It is plain also in those early beginnings of English literature, in Cædmon's poems or in Cynewulf's magnificent epic, *Christ*.

Through the corruptions of the centuries the student of English history traces the great principles at work. Even when Roman Christianity had reached its lowest degradation in the thirteenth century, and Chaucer's portentous picture of hypocrisy, coarseness, and religious display was a true description of English Christianity, there was still here and there the good parson:

> Out of the Gospel he the wordes caught,
> For first he wrought and afterward he taught.

And already Wyclif, the morning star, had arisen, and the Lollards had begun that protest against ecclesiasticism and that vindication of Bible truth which it has been the glory of England to continue to this day. In England the Reformation was inevitable. We were bound to have a Coverdale and a Tyndale, and with a fresh recurrence to Holy Scripture a new reformation always begins.

Now after 1300 years the missionary effort for England is still incomplete. Still the command has to be reiterated: *Make disciples of this nation, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.* Only a few in England are real disciples. Still it seems quite strange, almost a modern craze, to propound these commandments of Jesus as the veritable rule of life. The baptism has been

done, but the teaching of the commandments has been omitted or imperfectly done. Still multitudes of English Christians recognise no cogency in this last great commandment of the Lord, to make disciples of all the nations.

But He is with us, as He promised. All we have we owe to Him. We may be churlish, prone to grumble, slow to show our hearts; but we are well aware—hardly one sane thinker in the country will dispute it—that Christ has made us what we are. If there is any good in us, if we have any pre-eminence among the nations, it is His doing. We are the fruit, the first-fruit, of missions. The obligation lies on us to evangelise the world because we have been evangelised. When any one comes to us in England and asks if missions succeed, we have to reply, *Si monumentum quæris, circumspice.*

Comparing ourselves with the Gospel of Christ, as we have been tracing it in His commandments, it seems almost presumptuous to call ourselves Christians; but comparing ourselves with the best countries which Christ has not penetrated, China or Thibet, we are bound to recognise that our debt to the Gospel of Christ is infinite, and our gratitude to those who obeyed His command, *Go*, should be unbounded.

We cannot attempt an ordered enumeration of the

results which have ensued from this last commandment of our Lord. But there is one other field of missionary effort which it may be worth while to mention. The great nation of the United States is a missionary triumph. When the Pilgrim Fathers crossed the Atlantic, their avowed purpose was not only to escape the blind tyranny of the Stuart *régime*, but also to carry the Gospel to the aborigines of that country in which they were going to settle. The Parliament of the Commonwealth—for it was the characteristic of those Parliaments to be composed almost entirely of devout and vital Christians—appointed "a corporation for the propagation of the Gospel amongst the heathen natives of New England." That was the first of our English missionary societies. The seal of the Massachusetts colony is still an Indian with a label from his mouth: *Come over and help us.* Accordingly John Eliot and David Brainerd were the natural outcome of the colonisation, as the colonisation was an outcome of this last commandment of our Lord. Two apostles of such love and zeal had hardly been seen since the earliest days of the Church. If it were legitimate to canonise men as saints, these would certainly be canonised. Brainerd's passion of prayer and work is well known, because it was the perusal of his life that fired the soul of Henry Martyn, and did much

to create the modern missionary spirit. But his predecessor and master, John Eliot, is equally deserving of our study and veneration. He founded churches among the Indians, gathered them in, and trained them in the divine life. Cotton Mather said of him after his death: "He was one who lived in heaven while he was on earth; and it is no more than pure justice that he should live on earth after he is in heaven. We cannot say that we ever saw him walking anywhither, but he was therein walking with God; wherever he sat he had God by him, and it was in the everlasting arms of God that he slept at night." Protestantism, it is said, produces no saints! It does not canonise men, least of all men like St. Edmund, or St. Thomas à Becket, or St. Alfonso de Liguori. But its uncanonised saints are innumerable. Eliot and Brainerd are saints in the sense which the Roman Church intends. They are men inflamed with the love of Christ, spending and being spent in the passionate effort to bring men to God.

Whatever criticism may be made of the American people, no one can deny that religious activity is more general among them than in any other community that has ever existed. The churches are alive and aggressive. In face of the stupendous problems presented by alien immigration, by the

negro race, and by the materialism of wealth, evangelical Christianity stands armed, alert, and confident. And America is, as was said, a fruit of missions.

These two great countries that speak the English tongue are drawing near to one another. The first-fruit of missions themselves, they have no more sacred bond of union than that they realise the missionary call more keenly than any other nation under heaven. The Student Volunteer Missionary movement, beginning in America, is already a power in our own country. And these thousands of young and ardent men, in the colleges and universities of the English-speaking countries, are taking our Lord's commandments seriously, and are inscribing on their banner, "The evangelisation of the world in this generation."

It would seem, then, that this last commandment of Jesus, after a century of modern missionary enterprise, is just entering on a new career of authority and power. As all His commandments are receiving a new attention, and are being applied with a new zeal to the conduct of life, so this, which sums them all up, is captivating the imagination of the Church. The new century will see a movement more wonderful than any since the time of the Apostles; all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of God. It

is not a little amazing that a commandment like this should lie almost unnoticed for centuries, should be so ignored and forgotten that the generation in which Carey arose regarded it as an impiety, an interference with the ways of Providence, to attempt to convert the heathen, and then should leap into light and power and present itself as the marching orders of the Church issuing fresh from the Captain's mouth. But that is the extraordinary property of the words of Jesus: they cannot die. They may be buried for centuries in the hands of mummies, but directly they are found and sown they spring up and bear fruit.

The time is probably coming when a Church which is not missionary will cease to be called a Christian Church. In those good days, every congregation will feel it as necessary to have its agent abroad as to enjoy a ministry of its own at home. The money will not be withheld, because it will be the sober and rational conviction of every Christian that whatever he has belongs to Christ, and he will see that if Christ commands the evangelisation of the world, He has a right to claim His own money for the purpose. In place of warships and great guns, the great Christian communities will send out their choicest sons and daughters, furnished with all the necessaries, spiritual and material, to make disciples of all

nations, and to teach them all things whatsoever He has commanded.

Surely it is for that good day we are praying every time we say: "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

CHAPTER XX

SUMMARY

IN looking back on the subject which has been handled in the preceding chapters, we may very safely challenge the opinion of the candid reader, not as to the sufficiency of the handling, but as to the intrinsic quality of the Commandments of Jesus.

Appeals to taste are dangerous, and where differences occur there is no argument to convince. We cannot forget what David Hume, the clearest writer of the eighteenth century, said concerning Shakespeare: "Nervous and picturesque expressions as well as descriptions abound in him; but in vain we look either for purity or simplicity of diction."* And in the early years of this century a writer could say about Milton's prose: "It seems very singular that Milton, who had a very high opinion of the literary genius of his predecessor in the tuneful art, should yet so far overlook the simple, elegant, and melodious

* Hume's *History of England*, vi. 162.

style of Cowley in his prose works, and adopt the reverse of all these good qualities in writing, when he was employed on his own prose essays." There is no self-evident excellence of style, or character, or genius, that will not be depreciated by some one or by certain ages. As Hume could not perceive the transparent purity and simplicity of Shakespeare's tongue, and as Milton's majestic and dazzling prose appears uncouth and obscure to the admirers of Cowley, so it is quite easy to find persons who profess that the commandments of Jesus make little or no impression upon them. But I feel some confidence that they who have accompanied me up to this point in the study of His commandments will very freely admit that each of His precepts has a limpid and self-evident truth, and an authority which stands in no need of outward confirmation, and that when they are gathered together in a code they have a spiritual majesty and a circumstance of pomp and power which leave the giving of the Law on Mount Sinai far behind.

The reader will pardon me if I make this personal confession. No words ever spoken affect me as these do: *But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thine inner chamber, and having shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret;* or, *Go thou and do likewise.* I find such words, apparently simple and ordinary,

appealing to me like the language of a better country, revealing to me unsuspected forms of being, and moving me as if a hand from the invisible were at work on the keyboard of my soul. Matthew Arnold in his famous essay on poetry took several lines from the great poets, such as:

> In la sua volontade è nostra pace.
>
> And courage never to submit or yield,
> Or what is else not to be overcome.

And he appealed to them as containing the indefinable essence of poetry, and proposed them as touchstones by which we should avoid fallacious estimates, and maintain a true estimate, of poetry. In the same way I find these immortal precepts of Jesus commending themselves as containing a quality, an authority, a perfection which is distinctive. This, I unconsciously repeat to myself as I read and brood over His ethics, this is the essence, the perennial spring, of ethical truth. It is limpid, yet unfathomable. It is practical, and yet transcendental. It comes like the light of morning breaking over the eastern hills, and floods the land with life and beauty—comes from another orb, another sphere, but is at home in this, and by its presence makes this for the first time a veritable home. That this is my own feeling—a feeling which grows and inten-

sifies the more I verse myself in His commandments, —I am bound to confess. If this feeling has not been communicated to the reader of the foregoing pages, I must sadly confess that I have failed in my work.

But now we will bring the book to a close by grouping together a few of the distinguishing characteristics of the commandments, and by commending ourselves to God, that we may have wisdom and courage to obey them.

1. First of all, we find, as was stated at the beginning, that, notwithstanding the unsystematic form in which the precepts are given, the commandments of Jesus constitute a complete and sufficient code of morality. It eschews casuistry: compared with the teaching, for example, of Alfonso de Liguori, it may seem to be vague and general, avoiding specific instances and not giving an immediate answer to practical inquiries. And it is not for a moment maintained that any moral question which may be raised can be answered immediately and categorically by definite words of Jesus, as it would be by a Jesuit confessor. But there is this difference: the confessor will give the answer by rule, and it will be in innumerable cases wrong or misleading. Jesus will give the answer by awakening and instructing the conscience which has been training itself in His commandments. The apparent

service which the confessor renders is an irreparable injury. He saves the soul precisely that exercise in the discovery of moral truth which is essential to the real assimilation of it. We can only do right when we are right; we can only be right in proportion as our lives are moulded on the principles of the commandments of Jesus. And as the soul grows and strengthens in those principles it acquires the faculty of deciding on the particular questions which occur. "Ye have an unction from the Holy One; ye need not that any should teach you." That serene and balanced certainty of conduct, that state in which

> Love is an unerring light,
> And joy its own security,

is rendered impossible while casuistry undertakes to reach decisions for us. The code of Jesus, on the other hand, sets the soul on certain lines of direction and exercises it in certain habitual acts, with the result that it finds within itself the guidance that it needs. To the question: What in the present circumstances am I to do? How am I to unravel this complication? it replies by demanding that one should trust implicitly in Jesus Christ, should admit the indwelling of His Spirit, should honestly conform to His general directions of conduct, and then the way

will be clear; not otherwise. "To the *upright* there ariseth light in the darkness."

Jesus is a physician who cannot prescribe except to a patient who will put himself entirely under His *régime*.

But while refusing to settle casual points of ethics and insisting on a complete acceptance of the great antecedent principles—the principle of love, the principle of inwardness, the principle of putting the kingdom of heaven first—the commandments which He gives on these points are perfectly simple and unmistakable. If any one asks, What wouldst thou have me to do? here is the answer in such a form that one wonders how any of us can complain that God has left us in the dark. Here is He who speaks from heaven. No human voice could speak more clearly and more intelligibly. "This do" is the definite tone of all that He says.

"There are some doctrines," says Professor Bruce, "which the Church as a whole can hardly be said to know, they are so mysterious or so disputed. But the ethical teaching of Jesus is simple and copious in all its leading features; it is universally understood, and as universally admired. Protestants and Papists, Trinitarians, Socinians, and Deists are all at one here."*

* *The Training of the Twelve*, p. 344.

I appeal to experience for this assertion: A man who makes the commandments of Jesus his sole and absolute guide in life is never left in perplexity. He sees clearly what is right; and his action, baffling enough to one who is guided only by prudential, or conventional, or scientific ethics, proves in the end to be right. Moral questions are perplexing because they are not viewed from a sufficiently high standpoint. Jesus takes us up to a lofty place and shows us the facts in their true relation. The kingdom of God first, love to God and to one's neighbour as the Master's motive, judging by the inward thought rather than the apparent deed, the vigorous life of prayer, spiritual watchfulness, and absorption in bringing the world to Christ, these constitute a tower of observation from which all difficulties become clear.

2. But we pass to a characteristic of His commandments which is far from being recognised by Protestant and Papist, Trinitarian, Socinian, and Deist. And yet our study must have made the point abundantly clear.

All His commandments centre in His person. They are defined by His character and practice. They are explained by the fundamental truths which He reveals. And they can only be obeyed by virtue of that supernatural indwelling of His Spirit which it is His peculiar promise to give.

I imagine that if you take the moral teaching of Confucius, his system stands though his person should be forgotten or ignored. The ethical ideas of Buddha are independent of his person; he never even imagined that he could give them actuality in his followers by means of a sustained spiritual influence upon them. And consequently nowhere are hearts more callous than in countries like China, Corea, and Thibet, where the gentle teaching of Buddha presumably prevails. But it is not possible to isolate the commandments of Jesus from His person; if they were torn from His person they would wither and die. *Come unto me, Abide in me, Lo, I am with you alway, I will not leave you desolate*—this idea is the string on which all His precepts are threaded. When, for example, He requires purity of thought as well as purity of action, He by no means leaves the matter there, but He is able by an inward possession to control the wayward thoughts, and to hold the passions within the channels which He prescribes. When He bids us love God and our neighbour, He in a variety of ways reveals His power to awaken this supernatural love in our hearts. We may say that He dies on the cross, is buried, and rises again, expressly as the means by which He penetrates the heart and smites that hard rock so that love flows out.

When men speak of His commandments as counsels of perfection, or question whether they are applicable to communities or to modern life, they fall into the error of wrenching His commandments from Himself: they miss the point that He calls men and societies into a special relation with His person, in order to enable them to carry out His precepts.

To love your enemy is to human nature a paradox, an impossibility. To the soul dominated by Jesus it is easy. To dismiss the anxious care for earthly maintenance is for some temperaments a counsel of perfection; but He keeps such a temperament in perfect peace. To pray and to believe that the answer is given is to the natural man difficult, to the moralist doubtful, to the man of science absurd; but Jesus maintains within the energy of prayer, and things are done which are really miracles in His name. And in the same way, when a commercial community ventures to rely on Jesus to fulfil His commandments within it, a real commercial morality will be possible, just as already scores of individual believers can testify how their faith has been justified when they have adhered to principle, and trusted Christ to bring them through. And when States will rise to the conception of a national faith in Christ for the purpose of applying His doctrine to national

concerns, the Christian ethics will be possible in public affairs.

The Christian ethics only appear visionary and fall into discredit when their central thought, "But *I* say unto you" and "Abide in me, so shall ye bring forth fruit," is forgotten.

3. But the most remarkable fact about these commandments of Jesus is that the world, in its moral progress, never gets beyond them. As the wave rises they always surmount it. It is not possible to bring any moral truth discovered since which was not already contained in His code.

It would take us too far afield to examine the systems of Kant, of Adam Smith, of John Stuart Mill, of Mr. Herbert Spencer, and to compare them with the ethics of Jesus. But Kant's supreme law, "So act that the law of your conduct might be law universal," is an echo, a faint echo, of Jesus. Mill, after all his utilitarian speculation, could give no better summary of right conduct than always so to act as would win the approval of Jesus Christ. Mr. Spencer's *Data of Ethics* is interesting enough, but it is not so simple as the Master's, and on the other hand it does not carry us any further. That is to say, one who conformed to Mr. Spencer's ideal would not be a better man than one who conformed to Christ's, while in Mr. Spencer's system there is no

notice or sanction in the least corresponding to the love and indwelling of the Divine Saviour.

The Roman Catholic Church has devoted much thought to what she calls moral theology, and it must be owned that her morality deviates widely from that of Jesus. But has she in any way improved upon or got beyond the Master's teaching? St. Alfonso de Liguori, the latest saint to be canonised, a doctor of the Church, may be taken as the most authoritative of Catholic moralists. In his moral theology he teaches: If some one commits adultery, but does so not because the person is a relation or a wife, but because only she is beautiful, the adultery is not adultery. That does not seem to be an advance beyond our Lord's teaching on this subject. Alfonso also teaches that, while you may not swear a lie, you may swear one thing, meaning another; that is only mental reservation. He also teaches that servants may, if they regard themselves as underpaid, take what is equal to what they ought to receive; and in extreme necessity the thief does not sin if he only takes what is purely necessary. One can understand the condition of Sicily and Naples, the country which produced this latest of the saints, after the study of his morality. But so far from advancing on the ethics of Jesus, he has destroyed it and made it incredible.

But nothing more manifestly shows that the ethics of Jesus is final, and cannot be improved, than the way in which the Apostles regard it. Peter, Paul, James, and John were commissioned to reveal or to explain doctrines which had not fallen within the scope of Jesus. But in their ethical teaching they simply echo the Master's words. Never do they venture on a change or an addition. St. Paul, for example, carefully marks whenever he gives a direction which emanates from himself and not from the Lord. And it will be noticed that these directions are not momentous, nor do they in the least disturb the ethical system of the Master.

Rightly considered, the fact I am dealing with would of itself establish the divinity of our Lord. In so complex and shifting a subject as ethics, to have given a complete summary, and to have said the last word, without even formally constructing a system, is a greater miracle than to feed a multitude with a few loaves or to raise the dead.

But so far from getting beyond the ethics of Jesus, it is a fact, as I have already had occasion to observe, that His precepts are not yet fully obeyed; they are only beginning to be understood; the recognition of their authority and sufficiency seems to be breaking on the modern world as a surprise.

The casuistry of the Jesuits was, if carefully

examined, an elaborate system for acquiring power over persons of influence by inventing ways and rules of evading the commandments of Jesus. Mortal sins were not the breach of His commandments, but the violation of the prerogative or authority of the Church. In Protestantism no serious theologian has ever set himself to discredit or elude the ethics of Jesus; theoretically every Protestant Christian is expected and required to study the New Testament for himself and to learn how to bring every thought into subjection to the law that is written. And to this discipline of the conscience, which is at least the ideal of every Protestant community, we may trace that moral invigoration which carries the countries of the Reformed Faith to the van in the progress of the world. But there is a Jesuitry of the conscience always at work; indolence and unbelief are constantly finding modes of slipping through the meshes of Christ's commandments. Few, perhaps, would venture to say that His demands are impossible, but many cover their failures by a vague notion that the standard is ideal rather than practical,* and are content if they obey the Ten Commandments without any special thought concerning the commandments

* See Professor Bruce's vigorous remarks: "To many, the creed which resolves all religion into impracticable ideals is very convenient. It saves a world of trouble and

of their Lord. Then the substitution of a doctrinal system and theoretical tests of orthodoxy for the plain truth of Jesus that He would judge men by the degree in which they had kept His commandments, has transferred the momentum of the religious life from the moral to the metaphysical sphere. Thus, in accepting the truth that faith in Jesus Christ, without works, justifies, Protestants have often failed to notice that without obedience to His commandments there can be no genuine faith in Jesus Christ.

In spite of the salutary Epistle of James, which reminds us that, when a brother is hungry or naked, faith in Jesus implies feeding and clothing him, many have entirely neglected the Samaritan's work, and the command, *Go thou and do likewise*, under the impression that saving faith in Jesus was sufficiently realised in believing that their past sins were forgiven.

For these and many other contributing reasons it has come to pass that though we have always kept the commandments of Jesus as our theoretical code, we have by no means made them our practical rule of life; in a sense we have not seriously thought of

pain; it permits them to think fine thoughts, without requiring them to do noble actions; and it substitutes romancing about heroism in the place of being heroes." *Training of the Twelve*, p. 379.

doing so, for in thinking of the Christian religion our attention has always been turned in a different direction.

It is therefore a thought which comes with all the force of novelty, a thought which is perhaps destined to revolutionise the twentieth century, that here in the commandments of Jesus we have the simple and eternal law of human life ; that as this law is obeyed human life becomes happy and good, and the kingdom of God steals into the world ; but that while this law is ignored or violated, the world-old sorrows and miseries, the strifes, the bitterness, the disease and death, which have been with us since the Fall, must continue.

And if now we have been led to recognise in these commandments the authoritative rule of life, if we are conscious that here we have the true answer to the question : " What must I do that I may inherit eternal life ? " if reason is convinced, and conscience utters her solemn confirmation, we are confronted by the practical challenge, Do we intend to obey ?

The way is plain. In a favourable moment the wicket-gate swings open. And there before us opens up the beautiful way of His commandments. There is no worldly glory to be found on that path, no flattery to the flesh, no ease or self-indulgence ;

no dazzling lights flash and expire; no plaudits of men intoxicate the ear. But it cannot be said that there is any obscurity as to the nature of the way, as to the goal which will be reached, or as to the kind of blessedness which is obtained by pursuing it. The ways are pleasantness, the path is peace. All along the valley, to the point where the path begins to climb and to top the mountains and salute the heavens, there are lowly flowers that will spring into bloom at your feet, there are quiet resting-places, there are angelic companions, and there are open visions. There may be, there are, stern conflicts which engage all your powers and elicit all your faith; but these are the prelude of the joy of victory, and it is at these times that the presence of your Lord becomes the most vivid and effectual.

I have heard the song of pilgrims who have walked in that way, as they draw near to the blessed goal, nor is any song on earth more melodious.

Suffice it, if—my good and ill unreckoned,
And both forgiven through Thy abounding grace,—
I find myself by hands familiar beckoned
Unto my fitting place.
Some humble door among Thy many mansions,
Some sheltering shade where sin and striving cease,
And flows for ever through Heaven's green expansions
The river of Thy peace.

There, from the music round about me stealing,
I fain would learn the new and holy song,
And find at last, beneath Thy trees of healing,
The life for which I long.

The choice therefore is not obscure, and it rests entirely with the will. Whoever will may elect to walk in this way, to enjoy this serenity, and to reach the goal. "In the keeping of Thy commandments there is great reward."

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